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Foreign Policy Battles In Post-Syria Lebanon:

The Case Of The 2006 War

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THIS WORK IS DEDICATED

TO THE

SOUL OF MY BELOVED MOM

WITH MY ENDLESS GRATITUDE

Foreign Policy Battles in Post-Syria Lebanon: The Case Of The 2006 War

Sawsan Khanafer

Abstract

This thesis examines the overlapping domestic and external battles involved in the making of foreign policy in Lebanon. It contends that domestic actors bandwagon with external regional or international allies to contest the power of their domestic opponents and their external allies. Consequently, neither Realism, Constructivism, nor Pluralism offer viable explanations of Lebanon's foreign policy. The thesis examines this overlapping domestic and external contest in postwar Lebanon, paying particular attention to the domestic and geopolitical contests unleashed by Syria's withdrawal from Lebanon in April 2005. These overlapping battles manifested themselves clearly during the July 2006 War between Israel and Hizbullah. A comparative analysis of the provisos of the Seven-Point Plan and the articles of the United Nations Security Resolution 1701 demonstrates the domestic and external battles over Lebanese foreign policy and, concomitantly, over the control of post-Syria Lebanon.

Keywords: Foreign Policy, July 2006 War, Lebanon, Israel, Ta'if Accord

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Situating the Thesis

Lebanese foreign policy was born with the establishment of the state in 1943. Before the 1975 civil war, Lebanon's political system and foreign relations were based to a large degree on the National Pact. In addition to providing common grounds for power sharing among the Lebanese confessional leaders, the National Pact established the main parameters of Lebanon's foreign policy. It created an alternative for the desire of the Christian communities to associate more closely with the West, and the determination of the Muslim communities to underscore Lebanon's ties to the Arab world. Indeed, when major crises occurred, as they did in 1958 and in the late 1960s, they were primarily generated by disagreements over sensitive foreign policy issues. For example, the foreign policy shift of President Camille Chamoun in 1957 to place Lebanon in the US camp by accepting the Eisenhower Doctrine, which was meant to diminish Soviet and Nasserist influence in the region, was opposed by the Muslim community and led to a brief civil war in 1958.

Unable to contain domestic sources of conflict and regional turbulences of the late 1960's and 1970's, the Lebanese system collapsed in the early 1970's under the weight of internal and regional factors. The outbreak of the Lebanese civil war in 1975 was in part an expression of the outdated nature of the 1943 power-sharing formula (Salloukh 2009). During the outbreak of the 1975 Lebanese Civil War and afterward, the

central government was not the only player that shaped Lebanon's foreign policy; rather, it shared that task with many sub-state actors that were formed at that time. The civil war ended with the promulgation of a new power-sharing pact in 1989. A postwar agreement replacing the National Pact, the Ta'if Accord had direct implications on Lebanon's foreign policy (Baroudi and Salamey 2008). The agreement proclaimed an important connection between Lebanon and Syria derived from a shared history and common interests from 1990 until 2005, Lebanon's foreign policy became heavily influenced by Syria. In fact, those who have examined the dominant role that Damascus played in Lebanese politics, suggest that Lebanon had no foreign policy of its own. Via several doctrines that followed Ta'if, Syria was able to inextricably bind tie between Lebanon's foreign policy to that of Syria, especially vis-à-vis the Arab Israeli conflict, thus tying any negotiation progress on the Lebanese track of the Arab-Israeli negotiations with that of the Syrian-Israeli track. In other words, Lebanon's foreign policy was placed at the service of Syria's national interests (Najem 2012).

The internal, regional, and international changes starting with Israel's withdrawal from South of Lebanon in May 2000, the election of president Bashar Al-Assad, the terrorist attacks of 11 September, 2001 against the United States, and the consequent 'War on Terrorism' that followed, leading up to the invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq, led to a more proactive US foreign policy toward the Middle East. This naturally affected the Lebanese scene. UN Security Council Resolution 1559, which called for democratic presidential elections in Lebanon, the withdrawal of all foreign forces, and the disarmaments of all remaining Lebanese militias was viewed by many Lebanese as an instrument used by the West, but mainly the US in the war against Iran- Syria, and

Hizbullah. Moreover, UNSCR 1559 proved to be a tool of inter-communal contests rather than a legal instance of international conflict regulation (Fakhoury 2009).

The assassination of former Lebanese Prime Minister Rafik Hariri on 14 February 2005 redrew the country's political map and led to the Syrian withdrawal from Lebanon in April 2005. This in turn raised hopes for a post-Syria democratic transition in Lebanon. It also created great expectations that foreign policy making in a post-Syria Lebanon will become less of a cumbersome affair. However, the renewed sectarian contest for political control of post-Syria Lebanon shattered hopes for a democratic recovery and reopened the old debate over Lebanon's foreign policy.

Lebanon's sectarian divisions were revealed in the Cedar Revolution that divided the Lebanese on many issues but especially foreign policy. The two political movements that dominated the political scene after 2005 – March 8 and March 14 – possessed different visions of Lebanon's international orientations. While March 14 forms the alliance of political parties and movements that are aligned with the West and the moderate Arab states led by Saudi Arabia, March 8 represented the alliance aligned with Syria and Iran giving priority to armed resistance against Israel and the development of relations with alternative non-state actors to counter balance the influence of the United States and its regional allies in the regional geopolitical struggle. The post-Syria era thus witnessed a reorientation of sub-state foreign policies as Lebanon's foreign policy was repositioned within the changing geopolitics of the region. Moreover, the increased tension between different Lebanese political groups was reflected in the contest among Lebanese politicians over state control. This has exposed the country to countless external interventions, renewing the battle over Lebanon's foreign policy between domestic, regional and international actors. It is the overlap between multiple domestic

and external actors that demonstrates the paradox Lebanese foreign policy is caught in: On one level, international and regional actors used and empowered Lebanese political actors to pursue the former's geopolitical interests; on another level, Lebanese political actors bandwagoned with external actors to strengthen their own domestic political positions (Salloukh 2008, 2009).

Israel's July 2006 war against Hizbullah is a powerful example of Lebanon's foreign policy battles during this war. Lebanon was once again a battlefield for a bigger regional contest: The US and its allies against the Iranian- Syrian alliance and its sub-state allies, but namely Hizbullah. On the one hand stood the US, its domestic Lebanese allies, and its regional allies; on the other hand, there was Hizbullah supported by its domestic allies, and its regional supporters, but namely Syria and Iran. The diverse reactions to this external aggression, the causes, the actual results, and the aftermath reveal a battle at more than one level. At the domestic level, the battle was between the pro-western 14 March alliance and the pro-Syrian and pro-Iranian political groups of 8 March. Both sides used foreign policy for domestic political gains. Despite the official government stance condemning the Israeli invasion against Hizbullah, the Fuad Siniora Government distanced itself from Hizbullah and did not exempt the party of its responsibility for starting the July War (Baroudi and Salamey 2008). On the other hand, Hizbullah accused the Siniora government of using the war to limit the former's political and military power. Hizbullah believed that some of the conditions placed as a prerequisite for the end of the July war, such as the stationing of UN troops on the Lebanese-Syrian border, were being instrumentally used by Siniora government to disarm and weaken Hizbullah (Salloukh 2008).

The other contest was a geopolitical struggle between Washington and Saudi Arabia against Iran and Syria using Lebanon as a battleground for their geopolitical interests. The 2006 War underscored once again how internal battles overlap with foreign interests to shape Lebanese foreign policy. It also demonstrated how Lebanese continue to disagree over defining the enemy, the ally, the countries' foreign policy orientation vis-à-vis the Arab-Israeli conflict, and the future role of its weapons arsenal.

1.2 Research Question

The overlap between multiple domestic and external actors, with varying visions and definitions of Lebanon, best demonstrates the dynamic overlap between the domestic and external levels that shape Lebanese foreign policy. Consequently, this thesis asks the following question: How does the 2006 July war expose the overlapping battles of Lebanese foreign policy? Israel July 2006 war against Hizbullah provides a case study for exploring the battles over foreign policy between different Lebanese actors as part of the post-Syria battle to relocate Lebanon from one regional camp to another. It demonstrates the contests between overlapping domestic and external actors, and hence the dynamic overlap between domestic and foreign politics, but namely how domestic actors bandwagon with external regional or international actors to consolidate their local position against their domestic opponents.

1.3 Methodology

The research method used in this paper is the case study method. The July 2006 war is used as a case study of how internal divisions overlap with regional and

international contests. The thesis examines the Seniora Seven-Point Plan against the 1701 UN Security Council Resolution to provide empirical evidence of the overlapping contests that transpired during the 2006 war. The debates surrounding the Seniora Seven-Point Plan and the 1701 UNSCR resolution are evidence of overlapping domestic and external foreign policy battles. The documents spotlight how domestic and external players aligned to change or defend Lebanon's geopolitical position. *The Daily Star* and *al-Akhbar* are primary source newspapers for the discourse of leaders from both March 8 and March 14. The Wikileaks cables have challenged the official discourse. I will locate evidence in the Wikileaks cables that reveal parallelism between the official discourse of domestic actors and their demand for external assistance against their local political opponent, in the post-Syria battle to control Lebanon. Moreover, Ali Hassan Khalil's book *July-War Secrets: (Safahat Majhoula Min Hareb Tamouz 2006)*, published in 2012, is one important primary source covering the day-to-day negotiations during the 2006 Israeli July war, recounted however from the perspective 8 March. The book serves as a counter-narrative to March 14 discourse of to the July war.

1.4 Map of the Thesis

This thesis is divided into five chapters. The first chapter introduces the main contours of the thesis. Chapter two provides a historical overview and a discussion of the main determinants of Lebanese foreign policy. The third chapter examines Lebanon's foreign policy during the Syrian era (1990-2005), especially Syria's control over Lebanon's foreign policy vis-à-vis Israel and the Arab-Israeli conflict. Chapter four explains Lebanese internal divisions over Lebanon's foreign policy after the Syrian

withdrawal in 2005. The July 2006 war serves as the case study to analyze the overlapping contest over Lebanese foreign policy. The main debate is around Prime Minister Seniora's Seven Points Plan to end the July war and the internal struggle over the drafting of UNSCR 1701. The final chapter spells out the practical and theoretical implications of the research.

CHAPTER TWO

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Introduction

This chapter examines the literature on Lebanese foreign policy. It focuses on the debates over Lebanese foreign policy which is difficult to explain using one specific theoretical paradigm. It begins by addressing foreign policy theory, while discussing the applications of this theory in the context of Lebanon. The second part of the chapter discusses the political determinants of Lebanese foreign policy. It analyzes the power-sharing protocols established at Lebanon's independence, and then moves on to analyze foreign policy determinants in the Lebanese state after independence. Finally, the third part of the chapter provides a brief overview of the foreign policy dynamics of the civil war era in Lebanon.

2.2 Theoretical Frameworks and the Case of Lebanon

Laura Neack (2008) argues that the study of foreign policy is the study of both statements or policies of decision makers as well as the behaviors or actions of states. The levels of analysis used in the study of foreign policy are the individual, state and systemic levels. Neack frames the study of foreign policy as one dominated by three worldviews: Realism, Constructivism and Pluralism.

Realism assumes that all leaders want to protect the state's long-term national interest. Consequently, individual differences between leaders are insignificant. Realism

assumes that all state-level differences are insignificant. Thus, according to Neack “Government type, history, economics, and the qualities of the individuals holding political leadership positions have no importance in and of themselves to the analyst” (2008: 31). Raymond Hinnebusch (2002) argues that realism has several important liabilities when trying to understand the Middle East. He suggests that the realist model, in which elites conduct foreign policy while representing populations insulated from any external influence, must be modified to fit Middle East foreign policy analysis. There is more than one reason to do so. First, many Middle Eastern states lack the impermeability and a secure national identity that realism assumes. Second, sub-state and supra-state identities are often dominant over a national identity. This is due to post-colonial arbitrarily drawn borders which were established between states and nationalist identities. Third, the problem of institutional and state formation in the Middle East has resulted in the failure to establish state autonomy from domestic demands. In Lebanon, the state system is still in the process of consolidation and suffers from all three shortcomings. Consequently, systemic dynamics have less effect on state behavior than realism expects. Indeed at the heart of realism is the assumption of the unitary state, which is absent in the Lebanese case.

As for the second worldview, Constructivism holds that interstate relations are dependent on the way identity is constructed. It regards the identities and interests of states as products influenced by specific historical processes along with the prevailing discourse in society (Walt 1998). Sub- and supra- state identities in the Middle East contend with state identities. Moreover, they inspire trans-state movements and ideas and constrain state-centric behavior. The result is a “duality where ruling elites are caught between *raison de la nation* (Pan-Arabism) and *raison d'état* (sovereignty) in

foreign policy making” (Hinnebusch 2002: 8). In Lebanon, the absence of a strong state and a strong national identity allow sub-state actors to develop their own separate interests and relations with foreign actors who share their political and/or religious aspirations. The absence of a cohesive state and the existence of different sub-state identity groups with different interests means that whoever controls the government is able to formulate policy in their own interest rather than in the interest of the state. It also means that subgroups within a weak state can develop their own foreign policy choices, which often clash with that of those of the central government (Barnett 2007: 201).

The third worldview, Pluralism, is the interpretation that politics and decision-making are situated mainly in government institutions, but recognizes the influence of many non-governmental/sub-state groups, and their use of resources, on the state’s international behavior. Pluralists consider Middle East states as fragmented and permeable, and hence “less capable of pursuing realist, “reason of state”, foreign policies, as is the case in Lebanon (Hinnebusch 2002:2). Within this context, scholars continue to examine the impact of domestic politics on the behavior of states. Several have explored how local interest groups can distort the development of state identities which directly affects a state’s international conduct (Walt 1998). In Lebanon, policy decision-making of sub-state actors is not located in the government framework as classical pluralism mandates. Sub-state foreign policies have mainly developed outside the government framework. The main reason behind this is the absence of strong institutions and a strong national identity. This has empowered sub-state actors and allowed them to develop their own foreign policies that at many times compete with those of the state.

International Relations theories have been criticized for lacking a clear explanation of how state and non-state factors affect foreign policy making. As such, developing a complete understanding of Arab states and their foreign policies entails understanding the role played by different factors at different levels. This is due to the increasingly complex relation between domestic issues and external ones. Consequently elements at each of these levels cannot be viewed separately. Bahjat Korany and Ali Dessouki also argue that relatively little research has been carried out on foreign policies of Arab states, and that this research is missing “rigorous conceptualization of foreign policy analysis” that aims to understand how foreign policy is actually made and implemented and “how these states view the world and their role in it” (2008: 3). Moreover, Hinnebusch labeled the Middle East regional system as being centered around an Arab core, united by a regional identity but fragmented by the state system and ringed by a non-Arab periphery (2003: 1). As a result, Middle Eastern states become insecure which often leads to inter-state conflict with each state seeking external patrons to help it in the resulting regional power struggles (Hinnebusch 2002). Similarly, Carl Brown describes the Middle East system as constantly subject to high level of external interference by the “Western state system but never definitively absorbed in that system” (1984: 88). This means that variables such as sub-state identity, state institutions, and domestic politics need to be accounted for alongside systemic factors, such as the post-colonial state and the penetrated nature of the regional system, to fully understand the dynamics affecting foreign policy-making in the Middle East (Wilkins 2013: 4).

Applying a theoretical framework to Lebanese foreign policy is exceptionally complex. After all, Lebanon is a state paralyzed by weak institutions, sharp vertical divisions between different sub-state groups, and a clientelist arrangement on which the

confessional structure is based. Examining the literature on Lebanese foreign policy, the next section discusses the determinants of Lebanese foreign policy in a historical perspective.

2.3 The Determinants of Lebanese Foreign Policy

Lebanon is often discussed as a battlefield for regional and international forces, with little attention to the country's foreign policy. The domestic and regional confrontations have exaggerated the intersection of domestic and foreign politics in Lebanon. Michael Hudson (1985) views Lebanon as 'politically underdeveloped' because its political institutions do not operate similarly to other stable democracies. Farid El Khazen (2000) defends the viability of the Lebanese political systems blaming external variables for its collapse. Fawaz Traboulsi (2007) traces the impact of foreign intervention on Lebanon's modern history. Karim Pakradoni (1984) and Nicolas Nassif (2007) discuss the impact of foreign intervention on Lebanon's presidential elections. The analysis of foreign policy in a pluralistic sectarian environment like the Lebanese one is exceptionally complex. Nassif Hitti (1989) links the national and cultural cleavages embedded in the process of state formation to the contradictory conception of Lebanon. The dilemma of Lebanese foreign policy fell between the demand of "Lebanism" and "Arabism". Albert Hourani (1988) argues that Lebanese foreign policy suffered because Lebanese leaders failed to develop a unified conception of Lebanon simply because it meant different things to different actors. Paul Salem (1994) links the ambiguity in Lebanese foreign policy to the disintegration of central power. Bassel Salloukh (2008) frames Lebanese foreign policy in a stubborn "two-level game", where

domestic and external politics overlap. Tom Najem (2012) argues that the main determinants of Lebanese foreign policy remain unchanged since the withdrawal of Syrian troops from Lebanon in 2005.

This study aims to contribute to the aforementioned literature, focusing mainly on how Lebanese foreign policy echoes a severe battle among different Lebanese politicians who continue to seek foreign help for more internal political gain against their local political opponent at the expense of Lebanon's sovereignty and foreign policy independence. A proper evaluation of the determinants of Lebanese foreign policy requires first a review of the country's multiple power-sharing arrangements, and their different impacts on foreign policy. The 1943 National Pact is examined first.

2.3.1. The National Pact and Foreign Policy

Lebanon's multi-confessional society includes eighteen officially recognized sects. Whereas Lebanon's Muslim population consists primarily of three main sects the Shiite, Sunni, and Druze, its Christian community is divided into several main sects Maronites, Greek Orthodox, Greek Catholics, Armenian Orthodox and Armenian Catholics (Seaver 2000: 254). Lebanon's experiment in power-sharing dates back to the country's independence in 1943. The National Pact of 1943, an unwritten gentlemen's agreement that is based on the 1926 Constitution, established a power-sharing confessional system in Lebanon. It is an agreement between representatives of the largest Christian and Muslim communities that created a compromise to reconcile the demands of both sects. Both groups renounced their loyalty to France and Syria respectively. This in turn, had direct implications on the new state's foreign policy obligations. The agreement stipulated that there would be no close alliance, with and

protection from, France; it also rejected Muslims calls for union with Syria (Salem 1994). According to Khazen “Issues of reform, state-building, and pro-Arab foreign policy which have marked political life since 1943 were overshadowed in the 1970s by the question of Lebanon's commitment to the Palestinian cause and by demands of radical transformation in the country's political system. As a result, in the 1970s Lebanon’s ‘Arab face’ meant unconditional support for the PLO’s violation of all the agreements signed with the Lebanese government” (1991: 51). In terms of foreign policy, the National Pact attempted to solve Lebanon’s identity conflict by describing it as “an independent state with an Arab face” (Salloukh 2008: 285).

The National Pact maintained the sensitive balance between all sects by ensuring that no one group felt isolated. It was also a delicate balancing act to preserve the autonomy of the country’s religious groups while guaranteeing their proportional representation in the central government. Several factors transformed the demographic structure of Lebanon in the mid-1950s. In addition to this, economic growth focused mainly on the services sector leading to urbanization and deepening the rifts between Beirut and its periphery, as well as creating a socioeconomic gap that paralleled religious affiliations. The power-sharing pact privileged the Maronites over other groups; the Shiites, on the other hand, were at the bottom of the social-economic ladder (Zahar 2005). Hitti (1989) argues that although the National Pact provided a common ground for power- sharing among Lebanese confessional leaders. It however failed to serve as an instrument of integration, and failed to foster a sense of national unity.

Loyalty to the state and its political institutions failed to emerge because of the survival of primordial loyalties. Many Lebanese remained attached to their religious communities, clans, and families rather than to their state. Furthermore, since Lebanese

law demands that each citizen must belong to one of the recognized religious groups, every Lebanese citizen is officially recognized as having two identities: one national and another confessional (Melhem 1996: 2-3). Sub-state loyalties remained much more powerful than national ones. Consequently, Lebanese developed, and still suffer from, conflicting sub-national sentiments. Moreover, conflicting loyalties among the Lebanese and the inability of the political system to transform itself resulted in the weakening of any form of strong government. This has ultimately opened the way to all kinds of influences in domestic politics by outside powers.

With the collapse of the National Pact during the civil war Lebanon's foreign policy shattered into confessional pieces, and the ambiguity of Lebanon's foreign policy became a consequence of the disintegration of the central government and the radical changes that affected the political system (Saleme 1988). It is important to note the reasons behind state collapse in order to draw parallels with the unstable Lebanese political situation of 2006.

Najem lists several perspectives advanced by scholars to analyze the collapse of the Lebanese state. First, several scholars have pointed to the economic inequalities that existed between the different groups in the country. The shortsighted over-protection of the patronage system by political leaders slowed development and economic reform, eventually leading to the breakdown of the traditional patron-client system. Protectors of the status quo would resort to coercive measures to counter challenges to the system evoked by left-wing groups. A second school of thought does not accept the previous as a sufficient explanation, arguing that the Lebanese population was divided primarily along sectarian rather than class lines. Lebanon's political community was thus polarized along sectarian lines: the predominantly Christian who supported a pro-western

Lebanon, and the predominantly Muslims who supported Pan-Arabism (2012). Changes in the Arab world, more specifically the increased popularity of Arab nationalist and Arab socialist ideas, undermined the foreign policy compromise of the National Pact. That the state was unable to define the rules of the game on one hand, and that such constituencies did not advocate self-restraint on the other hand, created a situation where a debate over a foreign policy issue would degenerate rapidly into one over identity (Hitti 1989).

A third school of thought suggests that the proportional representation formula of 1943 no longer mirrored the demographics of the 1960s, and were thus challenged by the under-represented parties but mainly the Shiites. A fourth school highlights the breakdown of elite-mass relations as a key explanation of the collapse of the state, suggesting that the *zu'ama'* became prisoners of their own "streets" due to external interventions, and thus were forced to pay lip service to extreme causes, while deterring intra-elite cooperation and paralyzing the government (Najem 2012: 29-30).

Najem believes that the pressures originating from external factors, along with the external penetration of the Lebanese system, played the most instrumental role in the collapse of the Lebanese state. The Arab-Israeli conflict and the armed Palestinian presence in Lebanon constituted a major load on the Lebanese system, effectively polarizing Lebanese domestic politics. This penetration weakened the Lebanese population's sense of national identity, thus creating an environment where external actors easily penetrated the system and forged military, economic, and/or ideological alliances with internal factions. The PLO presence specifically inflamed tensions between Christian and Muslim sects, and disrupted the traditionally neutral foreign policy orientation of the state as established by the 1943 National Pact (2012).

According to Brenda Seaver, “Arab nationalism and the synergy it generated with Palestinian nationalism augmented inter-Arab tensions by producing a shift in the region's balance of power. The new regional power configuration, in turn, accentuated divisions within Lebanese society and culminated in Syria's dominant presence in Lebanese politics” (2000: 258).

2.3.2. Consociational Democracy and Foreign Policy

The National Pact included provisions that built a consociational democratic framework for Lebanon. Michael Kerr describes the National Pact as a reformulated continuation of an inter-confessional political administration that had developed under the Ottoman Empire and the French Mandate (2005: 2). The outcome was a Lebanese state built on sectarian identities often in conflict with each other and all gathered in the confessional system. Prior to 1975, Lebanon's power-sharing arrangement had been praised for its ability to maintain civil order and sustain a limited democracy in a deeply divided, modernizing society, set in a turbulent region (Seaver 2000). Several scholars debated the efficacy of the consociational framework. Arend Lijphart (2002) supports consociationalism, as the favored choice for plural societies, stressing that such an understanding would guarantee group autonomy as well as evenhanded power-sharing. He indicates that successful democracy in divided societies is achieved via group autonomy and the sharing of executive power. Lijphart (1977) classifies Lebanon as a plural society with a large number of rigidly self-contained segments.

Hudson (1988) argues that the fact that consociational elements were present during a period of democratic stability does not justify our assumption that they caused it. In fact, we have to distinguish between phases of democratic stability and

consociational elements when evaluating the Lebanese system. Moreover, he suggests that political immobilism, reflected in the government's inability to deal with socio-economic and ideological challenges, was a result of consociational devices. Consociationalism often generated conflict and institutional impasse, and reinforced sectarianism and elite rule. Hudson adds that the failure of consociationalism in Lebanon also challenges the effectiveness of power-sharing formulas in deeply divided societies. The case of Lebanon demonstrates the absence of two major elements necessary for the success of power-sharing: a strong state and state autonomy from society. Hudson argues that power-sharing became the instrument of a particular segment and could not be used to resolve conflicts and tensions.

Kerr explains how the National Pact was mainly a device to achieve independence, and to regulate conflicting Christian and Muslim ambitions over Lebanon's national identity and its place in the Middle East. The National Pact was not intended to be a long-term consociational formula for ending sectarian conflict, but rather a "realpolitik compromise" undertaken by the Maronite and Sunni leaderships to rid themselves of the French (2005: 124). The transition from a consociational system to a democratic one never took place. Lebanon remained a state fractured by various religious groups that challenged the state's sovereignty at all levels and especially foreign policy. Hitti argues that the confessional system had a built-in contradiction. It was built on "nursing different sectarian cultures that would encompass different, often contradictory political and national values can never be brought together to produce a harmonious foreign policy" (1989: 21). Salloukh also argues that the confessional system hindered the development of democratic politics. It created weak institutions and nourished sectarian identity at the expense of a national affiliation (2010: 143). In terms

of foreign policy, the confessional system allowed sectarian groups the power to pursue their own political agenda and form their own external alliances to strengthen their domestic positions.

2.3.3. Different Visions of Lebanese Foreign Policy

Lebanon's long history of sectarian and bloody conflicts as well as its position in an unstable region made it an easy target for sovereign states. States seeking to establish regional hegemony seek clients to serve their objectives. 1950's and 1960's were times of intense conflict in the Middle East. Many of these conflicts developed because of weak states, leaders' inability to manage domestic conflicts, and the existence of artificial borders (Bronson 1996: 213). Lebanon was product of the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, one that created states with arbitrary borders, supra-state identities, and powerful sub-state actors (Hinnebusch 2003: 154).

Since the establishment of Greater Lebanon, the Lebanese have been arguing whether their national identity is Lebanese, Arab, Mediterranean or Phoenician (Kaufman 2006: 169). Christians claimed they were originally Phoenicians while Muslims argued they were part of the Arab world and Greater Syria. According to Albert Hourani, Lebanese leaders failed to develop a unified conception of Lebanon simply because they subscribed to different "visions of Lebanon" (Hourani 1988: 10). This identity conflict had its direct impact on foreign relations. It allowed sectarian leaders to exploit their different visions of Lebanon and to form alliances and strengthen their internal positions. According to Najem (2012), the relative weakness of the Lebanese state throughout the country's history, and the political order established on the 1943 pact, allowed Lebanese sectarian leaders to undermine the strength of the state.

The National Pact established the provision of maintaining a neutral foreign policy orientation with the West, on the one hand, and on matters relating to the Arab world. Moreover, Lebanon's susceptibility to the influence of sub-state actors and their supra-state identities challenged the authority of the state as the maker of foreign policy. Salem (1994) offers three major reasons for the prevalence of sub-state foreign policies in Lebanon. First, the historical links of Lebanon's communal groups with outside powers, which include the Maronites to Rome and France, the Sunnis to several Arab states; the Shiites to Iran; the Druze and their ties to their co-religionists in Syria and Israel. Second is the double negation of the national pact, which frustrated national subgroups, who were unable to pursue foreign interests via the central government, and therefore pursued foreign links of their own. Finally, the high level of internal dissatisfaction within the political system created a problematic environment that allowed sub-state actors to thrive. Examples of this include the Muslim leaders and political groups feeling of underrepresentation, and the Christian groups fear from a largely Muslim Palestinian armed groups in the late 1960's and early 1970's.

Before the 1975 civil war, Lebanon's foreign relations were built on maintaining a sensitive balance between the desires of the Christian communities and the wishes of the Muslim communities to underscore Lebanon's Arab identity. Salloukh (2009) states that whenever there was a discrepancy between the desires of the two major communities, this often led to violent political and armed confrontation. Major domestic crises were primarily generated by sensitive foreign policy issues, as in the case of 1958 civil war and in the confrontations of the late 1960s. The power-sharing principles of the 1943 National Pact resulted in foreign policy dilemmas. They also failed to achieve integration and foster a sense of national unity (Hitti 1989). The compromise

consecrated in the National Pact resulted in a “marriage” built on a double-divorce, according to Salem (1994: 70). The National Pact outlined which policies could not to be followed without indicating what policies were viable. It also suggested a form of non-alignment for Lebanese foreign policy. However, neither internal actors nor external powers were able to follow a nonaligned choice in foreign policy. The principle of non-alignment failed to address sub-state and supra-state aspirations, especially over the Arab-Israeli conflict, the Cold War, and the various inter-Arab cold wars over the decades. The outcome was that relevant communities and parties pursued conflicting regional and international alliances, creating an environment where nonalignment was difficult to follow.

The Lebanese state was not the only foreign policy maker, however. It shared this role with sub-state actors who also formulated their own foreign policies. In this regard, Salloukh poses the following question: “whose foreign policy choices should be privileged by the student of Lebanese foreign policy- those of the president, the prime minister, the speaker of parliament, the foreign minister, the variable sectarian sub-state actors, or all above the above” (2008: 283). Salem similarly asks: “When we speak of Lebanese foreign policy, do we mean the foreign policy of the central government, or do we refer also to the various subgroups that make up the Lebanese polity?” (1994: 69). Ghassan Saleme (1988) goes so far as to question whether Lebanese foreign policy is possible. After all, Lebanon’s foreign policy is basically dictated by sects who use their relations with foreign powers to strengthen their positions on the local scene.

2.3.4. The Overlap of Lebanese Foreign Policy

In most articles published about Lebanon, the country is analyzed as a battlefield for regional and international forces. A number of factors have blurred the demarcation line in Lebanon between foreign and domestic politics. Lebanon's open and *laissez-faire* political environment allows for the politicization for all kinds of objectives. Consequently, foreign policy choices that run counter to state goals are permissible and unorthodox ways of pursuing them are sanctioned. The second factor lays in the overlap between domestic and foreign politics. This expressed itself in the ideological priority between the demands of Lebanonism exposed by the Maronites and those of Arabism exposed by the Sunnis (Hitti 1989: 4). As Salloukh suggests, Lebanese foreign policy is neither a matter of purely domestic nor purely external politics. He rather suggests a dynamic overlap between domestic and foreign politics, framing Lebanese foreign policy as a stubborn two-level game. He argues that domestic players externalized internal problems, bandwagoning with regional and international actors, such as the US, Israel, Syria, and Iran, to bolster their internal political positions (2009). At the other end, foreign intervention is encouraged because Lebanon's various internal parties and communities pursue their own foreign policies, often different from the central government's foreign policy which undermines the authority of the state. The outcome is an increase in Lebanon's vulnerability and permeability to external intervention and regional pressures at the expense of independence and sovereignty.

Sami Baroudi and Imad Salamey (2008) argue that domestic divisions render the process of foreign policy making in Lebanon exceptionally controversial and difficult. Consequently, internal balance of power between competing coalitions or blocs determines how a foreign policy scenario is approached. This internal balance of power is a function of several factors: the power base of each bloc, their mobilization

capabilities, the tenacity with which each bloc pursues its goals and the internal cohesion of a bloc, and, finally, a bloc's regional and international allies. As a result, the Lebanese government is not able to produce a coherent foreign policy due to the overlap between sub-state actors and their foreign allies. Saleme has voiced this paradox of Lebanese foreign policy in a sober way: "One is struck by the organic relation between the internal scene and the external regional and international balance of power-in Lebanon there is no clear -cut distinction between the two-which are intertwined and interdependent" (1988: 347).

2.4 The Civil War Era (1975-1990)

Two events are widely cited as marking the beginning of the Lebanese Civil War. The first occurred in February 1975 when the Lebanese fishermen's unions in Sidon, Tyre, and Tripoli organized protests against the monopoly of the Protein Company, a large high-tech fishing company owned in large part by former Maronite president Chamoun. The fighting provoked the Lebanese Army as well as the Popular Nasserist Organization in Sidon, along with Palestinian leftist organizations and would spread to all the major cities. The second event was on 13 April 1975, when assailants opened fire at a consecration of a new church in Ayn al-Rumana, attended by the leader of the Maronite-dominated Kata'ib party, Pierre Gemayel. The assailants killed three Christians, and within a matter of hours, a group of Maronite militiamen retaliated by ambushing a bus containing mostly Palestinians at Ayn al-Rumana where twenty-seven passengers were killed and twenty others wounded. This incident is widely considered as the main catalyst igniting the Lebanese Civil War (Seaver 2000: 256).

Between 1975 and 1976, Lebanon saw the complete decline of the Lebanese state. Beirut was divided into the Christian Eastern enclave and the Western Muslim enclave after intense battles with heavy casualties. In 1976, Yasser Arafat's Fateh organization joined the leftist National Movement alliance thus shifting the conflict in their favor. Lebanese political actors were caught in a disastrous war, which was exaggerated by regional developments, such as the Palestinian presence in Lebanon. The Muslims demanded a fairer division of the political pie. They addressed their insecurities by allying with the Arab nationalist movement, which was also pro-Palestinian. On the other hand, the Christians, who were more privileged in terms of political dominance, wanted a more neutral policy in relation to the Arab-Israeli conflict. More importantly, the Muslims demanded political reforms before an end to military hostilities. The Christians, on the other hand, demanded an end of military hostilities and the disarmament of the Palestinian groups in Lebanon before any political reforms were discussed (Traboulsi 2007). In part, this reflected a conflict over Lebanon's foreign policy orientation. The Christians wanted Lebanon to maintain strict neutrality in foreign policy; the Muslims, on the other hand, championed the use of Lebanon as a staging ground for Palestinian military operations against Israel. The delicate balance of power, an important element to stability in Lebanon, was shattered between the conflicting sub-state actors and their different policy foreign orientations.

The civil war alarmed Damascus, which considered Lebanon as its strategic backyard in the Arab-Israeli conflict. After one year of blood shedding and destruction, Syria decided to intervene against the Palestinians and their allies in Lebanon (Ellis 1999: 4). Damascus sent 30,000 troops to solidify the boundaries of the sectarian enclaves, and was later given formal sanction by the Arab League to remain in Lebanon

as an “Arab Deterrent Force” (Najem 2012: 37). On the diplomatic scene, Dean Brown was dispatched to Beirut as special ambassador of the US president. Brown, who was deeply involved in Lebanese internal affairs, met with the two prospective presidential candidates: Elias Sarkis who was backed up by Syria and the National Front, and Raymond Eddé, who was supported by Kamal Jumblatt and the Palestinians (Nassif 2007: 22). Brown found in Sarkis a partner who accepted the US-brokered Syrian military intervention. “On the eve of his departure, one day before elections, Brown hinted that the US was backing Elias Sarkis” (Traboulsi 2007: 198). Under Syria’s patronage, Sarkis was elected to the presidency on 8 May 1976. Henceforth, Lebanon’s foreign policy came under Syria’s influence especially vis-à-vis the Arab-Israeli conflict.

Israel watched developments in Lebanon with concern. The fighting provided an opportunity to weaken the Palestinian resistance. Events culminated with Israel invading and occupying South Lebanon in March 1978 in a bid to pursue the war against the Palestinian guerillas and to guarantee access to the waters of the Litani River (Ellis 1999: 5).

Israel sided with the Christian camp, supplying them with arms and training to balance against the PLO’s presence in Lebanon. Bashir Gemayel began his rise to power in the late 1970’s. Bashir, who had resigned from all posts to protest the entry of Syrian troops into East Beirut, enjoyed firm Israeli backing (Traboulsi, 2007: 208). He controlled the Christian sector and cultivated an alliance with Israel, who shared his objective of expelling the PLO from Lebanon (Najem 2012). Gemayel the so-called ‘candidate of the Israeli tanks’, as Walid Jumblatt described him, was elected president after the 1982 Israeli invasion (Traboulsi 2007: 215). Israel expected Gemayel to sign a peace treaty. Gemayel did not live long to implement his project, however. On 14

September 1982, one week before his inauguration, he was assassinated in an explosion in Phalange party headquarters in Ashrafieh. The next morning Israeli troops entered West Beirut. After the massacre of several hundred Palestinians in the camps of Sabra and Shatila, Amin Gemayel was elected to the presidency to succeed his brother on 21 September 1982 under the protection of Israeli tanks. During the first month of his presidency, Amin ordered the Lebanese Forces and the army to invade West Beirut. Lebanon became a country divided between two camps: one resisted the Israeli occupation with arms while the other negotiated a peace accord with Israel. Lebanon was a battlefield of proxy wars for regional and international conflicts that continued to feed the Lebanese domestic conflict. Local sub-state actors bandwagon with external actors to advance the former's political and confessional interests against their domestic opponents (Najem 2012).

With Amin in the presidency, Lebanese foreign policy orientation shifted towards a pro-US stance. During the early months of 1983, the United States tried to arrange a peace treaty between Israel and the Lebanese government. This proved to be untenable for everyone (Ball 1984: 6). However, the 17 May 1983 Agreement intruded far too much on Lebanon's sovereignty to be accepted by many Lebanese Muslim groups. Most importantly, however, it undermined Syria's security interests in Lebanon. Damascus refused to withdraw its forces from Lebanon in parallel with an Israeli withdrawal (Ball 1984: 8). The May 1983 withdrawal agreement negotiated with Israel cost the Gemayel administration much of its credibility. Syria considered the prospect of a continuing Israeli role in Lebanon as a security threat of the first order, which prompted it to reinforce its own presence in the country. It saw the treaty as a threat to its position in the region. After all, the treaty gave Israel rights to oversee Lebanon's

foreign policy and to normalize its relations with Lebanon. Because of Syrian pressure, the Lebanese government refused to promulgate the May Agreement, and Lebanon could not detach itself from the struggle with Israel (Ellis 1999: 6). By 1987, Syria troops returned to Beirut, this time invited by Muslim leaders. As a result, Syria once more became the leading force in Lebanon. Syria quickly backed newly emerging leaders in order to fill the power vacuum created by the withdrawal of the PLO, which included Amal and the newly formed Hizbullah, who would end up dominating the Muslim enclaves (Najem 2012).

Several summit meetings between Amin Gemayel and Syrian President Asad, along with the new diplomatic orientations included in Karami's ministerial declaration of May 1984, and in the December 1985 Damascus agreement, gave Syria a more "accepted" role in Lebanese affairs (Saleme 1988). The violence would continue as militias ruled the streets. With the end of Gemayel's mandate in 1988 and the inability to elect a new president, Gemayel was forced to transfer executive power to an interim council of ministers. This culminated with the naming of General Michel Aoun, the Army Commander and a Maronite, as a caretaker Prime Minister. This act further divided the Lebanese and angered both the Lebanese Forces and the Syrians who refused to recognize Aoun's appointment. It resulted in a government split, and the beginning of Aoun's military activism undertaken with some support from Iraq. Consequently, security in Lebanon deteriorated after Aoun shelled Syrian position in West Beirut and began a war against the Lebanese Forces. However, Saddam Hussein's invasion of Kuwait in August 1990 opened the way for a grand bargain between Syria/Saudi Arabia, and the US over Lebanon. In return for its participation in the war against Iraq, Syria was granted control over Lebanon.

2.5 Conclusion

This chapter examined different International Relations theories as models for understanding foreign policy in Lebanon. The case of Lebanon demonstrates the shortfalls of realism, constructivism and pluralism in explaining how foreign policy is formulated in a deeply divided sectarian society where sub-state actors act independently from central authority. The sub-state actors who are devoted to their political/religious leaders have strong affiliations and are influenced by their supra-state identities that eventually dictate their foreign alliances. Lebanon's case demonstrates the tendency of local sub-state actors to bandwagon with external actors to advance their own political and confessional interests against domestic opponents and at the expense of Lebanon's sovereignty.

Although the Lebanese Civil War of 1975-1990 prompted a reformulation of the Lebanese power-sharing formula, it never the less failed to question its fundamental logic. None of the renegotiated power-sharing formulas were able to move Lebanon to a liberal democracy. On the contrary, the civil war helped validate the fears and biases of each Lebanese group. Political life thus remained a zero-sum game in which the gain of one sect meant a loss for the others. The war changed only the relative strengths within the communal political configuration. The implementation of power-sharing formulas, rather than offering a solution that could empower the state, allowed for only a symptomatic relief of domestic struggles and external penetration, rather than curing the sectarian disease. The institutional arrangements set up by the Ta'if Accord weakened the Lebanese state's ability to act effectively in the realm of international relations. The next chapter examines Lebanon's foreign policy during the Syrian era (1990-2005). It

also looks at Syria's domination of Lebanon's foreign policy vis-à-vis Israel and the Arab-Israeli conflict.

CHAPTER THREE

Lebanese Foreign Policy: 1990-2005

3.1 Introduction

The shift from civil war to peace witnessed no recovery for political parties and warlords who suddenly switched sides. The war did not end with a peace conference that brought together the key actors under international sponsorship and guidance, as in the case of other protracted wars. However, the closest alternative to a peace conference was the Ta'if Accord, which handed major control of Lebanese foreign policy making decisions to Damascus (Khazen 2001).

Chapter Two discussed the determinants of Lebanese foreign policy, and delineated Lebanon's historically plural society, in which its different political groups actively pursue sub-state foreign policies. Moreover, the chapter explained how the National Pact failed to provide consensus in practice over Lebanon's foreign policy. This chapter focuses on the post-Ta'if period, highlighting the different dynamics at play in the context of Lebanese foreign policy between 1990 and 2005. The first section of this chapter discusses the different elements of the Ta'if Accord in order to illustrate the political and legal maneuvers that allowed Syria to obtain effective control over Lebanese foreign policy choices. The second section discusses the Post-Ta'if political establishment and state of affairs in Lebanon, along with the sequence of events and several treaties that followed Ta'if, which helped cement Syrian hegemony in Lebanon. The third section focuses on the different dimensions of the Lebanese political sphere in

the context of state and sub-state foreign policies. The section highlights the independent foreign policy motivations of Lebanese sub-state actors during this era, especially in actions that reflect Lebanon's own interests more than Syria's (Najem 2003). Finally, the fourth section discusses how these independent interests manifested in a post-Ta'if economic foreign policy.

3.2 Elements of the Ta'if Accord

The most lasting legacy of the Lebanese civil war, in terms of Lebanon's foreign policy, is that the country was exposed to substantial control by Syria. This was to an extent that Lebanon's sovereignty and independence came into question. What established the preconditions for this effective Syrian hegemony was the Ta'if Accord of 22 October 1989. Signed in Ta'if, Saudi Arabia, the agreement was the result of Saudi and American mediation with the different Lebanese political groups and with Syria in order to end the Lebanese civil war (Najem 2012).

The political order in Lebanon had become dysfunctional in several important respects. The first was the inherent weakness of the Lebanese state; the second was the deep sectarian divisions in the country exacerbated by postwar demographic changes; and the third was the compromise of the traditional neutrality of Lebanese foreign politics previously set by the 1943 National Pact. Najem (2012) contends that the Ta'if accord attempted to deal with the second and third factors, but was not designed to address the first of these systemic weaknesses, as it envisaged no major changes to the power role of the state in the Lebanese system and did not seek to strengthen the Lebanese state. Lebanon according to the 1943 pact was declared a state with an Arab

identity. This meant that it was expected to maintain cordial relations with the Arab states, but not at the expense of Lebanon's sovereignty. Ta'if on the other hand would declare Lebanon to be a country with "an Arab identity and belonging" (*Lubnan 'arabi al-huwiya wa-l-intima'*), a provision that theoretically assigns to Lebanon a pro-Arab foreign policy direction (Salloukh 2008: 286).

The conduct of foreign policy in pre-war Lebanon, as mandated by the National Pact of 1943, was the privilege of the president of the republic. Always occupied by a Maronite, the presidency was the most powerful office in the republic. Always occupied by a Sunni Muslim, The Prime Minister's ability to influence foreign policy decision-making was mainly a function of his personality, his communal status and reputation, and the type of responsibilities assigned to him by the president. In most matters, but especially in foreign policy making, the prime minister was always secondary to the president (Salloukh 2010).

Ta'if transferred the balance of executive power from the Maronite president to cabinet in its collective capacity, subsequently empowering the Sunni prime minister's office. The post Ta'if amendment of Article 52 that had once handed the president sole power to negotiate international treaties, made this conditional on the consent of the prime minister and cabinet. Moreover, Section 1 of Article 65 empowered cabinet to "craft the general policy of the state in all spheres," including foreign policy. Given the Maronite political establishment's traditional role as protector of Lebanon's independence and sovereignty from suspicious "pan-Arab unitary schemes", the shift in foreign policymaking from the presidency to the cabinet was a major concession. Moreover, Ta'if increased the prerogatives of the Shiite Speaker of Parliament by strengthening parliamentary supervision of the executive, thus making it almost

impossible for cabinet to dissolve Parliament. For this reason, the Speaker of Parliament emerged as an important player in shaping state policies, including foreign policy (Salloukh 2008: 286).

The Ta'if Accord unambiguously recognized that Lebanon was linked to Syria by “special relations” (*'ilaqat mumayyaza*). This entailed that both states share common interests including policy “coordination”, which was a euphemism utilized to mask Syria’s control of policy-making decisions. This idea was first planted in the stillborn Syrian-endorsed 1985 Tripartite Agreement between the then three largest militias: the Lebanese Forces, the Amal Party, and the Progressive Socialist Party. Four years later, Ta'if reestablished this contract (Khazen 2001). On the subject of the eventual withdrawal of the Syrian army from Lebanon, Ta'if mandated Damascus to “redeploy” (*i'adat tamarkuz*) its troops to the Bekaa and its western regions two years after constitutional reforms had been instituted and launched. The future mission and presence of Syrian troops in Lebanon was deemed a bilateral issue, however. These provisions represented an essential break with the provisions of the National Pact. It also signified the culminations of a long and continuous Syrian attempt to predicate the end of the war, on with the promulgation of constitutional reforms binding the two states in a “special relationship” (Salloukh 2008: 287).

Ta'if applied an equitable confessional division of seats to parliament and all other primary posts throughout state institutions. After the Ta'if Accord, parliament could not convene to elect a president without a two-thirds majority, which allows Muslim sects a greater say in foreign policy choices. Moreover, all post-Ta'if cabinets have rotated the top four ministries— Foreign and Expatriate Affairs, Defense, Interior, and Finance – among Lebanon’s four main sects: the Shi'a, Sunnis, Maronites, and

Greek Orthodox, which has allowed Muslim sects to control the Ministry of Foreign and Expatriate Affairs much more frequently than in the past (Salloukh 2008: 288). Ta'if also proposed the abolition of confessionalism in phases, but did not set a clear timetable to do so. It only proposed the formation of a national committee whose assignment was to phase out sectarianism. Accordingly, the agreement only reiterated assurances and calls for de-confessionalization. The accord decreed the elimination of confessionalism in the employment of low-level public posts, but retained sectarian criteria in high-level positions shared equally between Christians and Muslims (Fakhoury 2009: 11).

The last sections of the accord related to Lebanon's sovereignty, the Israeli occupation and Lebanon's relationship with Syria. They are the most challenging and unclear sections of the document. Ta'if states that the Lebanese government should take control over Lebanese territory for one year to help strengthen the internal security and Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF), as well as disarm and demobilize the militias. For a two-year period, The Syrian army would help the Lebanese state to restore government authority. After this period, the decision to redeploy Syrian armed forces to the Bekaa would be decided by a Lebanese-Syrian committee (Fakhoury 2009: 199). This delay was explained as a function of the special status granted to Syria as a guarantor of this accord, and Syrian forces, which remained the most formidable ground force in the country, were empowered to assist the Lebanese authority with the implementation of the accord (Najem 2012). Syria subsequently disrespected this provision, thus compromising Lebanese sovereignty and controlling Lebanese policy-making for the next fifteen years.

The Ta'if accord by no means constituted a break with previous power sharing modes implemented in Lebanon. It was designed in the tradition of consensus and

consociationalism that existed throughout Lebanon's history. By "emphasizing the democratic character of the political system and delegitimizing any entity that violates communal coexistence", Ta'if revived the Lebanese power-sharing model, and announced (albeit on paper) the rebirth of a postwar consociational democracy (Fakhoury 2009: 164). In contrast, however, Ta'if constrained Lebanon's foreign policy in favor of Syria's. Salloukh (2008) explains that Ta'if committed Lebanon to a pro-Syrian foreign policy alignment through bilateral agreements that emphasized Lebanon's pro-Syrian foreign policy both at the regional and international levels.

3.3 The Post-Ta'if Political Establishment

Lebanese Parliament ratified the Ta'if accord on 5 November 1989. This sparked another round of fighting, which ended with the defeat of General Michel Aoun's rival government in the summer of 1990. The implementation process ultimately began in August of 1990 (Najem 2012: 51). With the ratification of Ta'if, Syria was delegated the implementation of the "internationally and regionally sponsored" treaty while having custody over postwar Lebanon (Fakhoury 2009: 176). With hostilities nearing an end, militias had to adjust to this new situation and transformed themselves into political parties (Khazen 2003). All militias were demobilized except for Hizbullah, and Lebanese political groups opposed to Syrian control were emasculated. The Christian Phalange Party, for example, was overtaken by pro-Syrian elements that took control of its leadership positions from within. Samir Geagea, the leader of the Lebanese forces, was imprisoned on charges of assassinating former Prime Minister Rachid Karami, and his political party was banned. In addition to this, the supporters of the exiled Michel

Aoun were constantly harassed. Lebanese politicians were also no longer permitted to discuss the complete implementation of Ta'if in their speeches, because this suggested that Syria should withdraw from Lebanon (Salloukh 2008).

Syria's domination over Lebanon served its own geopolitical interests in many ways. It boosted Syria's position during the Arab-Israeli negotiations at the Madrid peace conference in October 1991. It was also significant to maintain Syria's geopolitical role as an important regional power. Controlling Lebanon's foreign policy strengthened Syria's role in any prospective comprehensive Middle East peace settlement (Salloukh 2005: 18). Najem explains that during its occupation of Lebanon, Syria imposed policies that were largely in the interest of Syria and at the expense of Lebanon's sovereignty (2003). This was especially the case with Hizbullah's weapons arsenal. The official reason given for Hizbullah's right to keep its arms was its right to continue its attempts to liberate land occupied by Israel. This unfounded decision to support Hizbullah strengthened Syria's position in its ongoing dispute with Israel. Hizbullah was a strong bargaining card that Syria used for its own interest in its peace negotiation with Israel. Hizbullah was therefore allowed to grow an elaborate military, political, and social network (Wilkins 2013: 34).

Several post-Ta'if treaties were concluded between the Syrian and Lebanese governments in order to consecrate Syria's hegemony over Lebanon's foreign policy. In May 1991, Syria reached new levels of influence in Lebanon with the conclusion of the Treaty of Brotherhood, Cooperation and Coordination between the Syrian and Lebanese governments. The Pact of Defense and Security followed a few months later (Salloukh 2005: 19). These treaties handed Damascus elaborate control over Lebanese domestic and foreign affairs, as well as prevented Lebanon from "developing an independent

foreign policy agenda” (Wilkins 2013: 32). These agreements called for high levels of military, political, and economic coordination between the two states.

The Treaty of Brotherhood, Cooperation, and Coordination established a complete harmonization of the two countries’ foreign policies. Article 1 of the treaty declared: “the two states will work to achieve the highest levels of cooperation and coordination in all political and economic and security and cultural and scientific and other fields” (Salloukh 2005: 19). Article 5 called upon both states to “coordinate their Arab and international policies and achieve the broadest cooperation in Arab and international institutions and organizations on different regional and international issues” (Salloukh 2008: 305).

The Defense and Security Agreement (*ittifaqiyat al-difa’ wa-l-amn*), signed in September 1991, provided for wide-ranging cooperation and coordination among the security, military, and intelligence establishments of Syria and Lebanon. It was intended to expedite the harmonization of the defense and security institutions of the two states. Article 21 banned “any action or activity or organization, in all military and security and political and information fields, that may cause danger or threat to the other country.” Article 22 determined that “each side commits [itself] not to offer refuge or facilitate the passage or provide protection to individuals or organizations who operate against the security of the other state, and in case they escape to it, the other side commits [itself] to apprehend them and deliver them to the other side per [the latter’s] demand.” The agreement also called upon the defense and interior ministries of both nations to coordinate the exchange of officers and instructors in military schools (Salloukh 2008: 307).

The formation of the Lebanese-Syrian Higher Council to manage these bilateral relations was another result of these agreements. The formation of this supranational committee, whose decisions were binding, mentioned that institutional organs were now subordinate to a greater authority, thus hijacking the autonomy of the Lebanese government. From a legal perspective, according to Fakhoury, these treaties would be fair only if the two states were placed on equal grounds during the negotiations. However, considering the imbalance of power between the two countries, collaboration on the domestic and foreign policy levels as mentioned was no more than a “euphemism of governance of Lebanon from Damascus”. Therefore, the May 1991 treaty was a bold attempt by the Syrian government to “export Lebanon’s national policies and decision-making apparatus to Damascus” (2009: 177).

Foreign policy in postwar Lebanon was thus guided by the principle of “privileged relations” between Syria and Lebanon, especially concerning security issues (Khazen 2003: 613). There were several examples of this in the postwar era. The so-called “concurrent paths” (*talazum al-masarayn*) was used as a slogan to establish control of the Lebanese-Israeli negotiations after the signing of the Israeli-PLO Oslo Accords in September 1993. This meant that the Lebanese and Syrian negotiation path was henceforth interlinked, and Lebanon was not allowed to negotiate a separate settlement with Israel. This also underscored Syria’s indispensable role in any viable comprehensive Middle East peace settlement. Under this pretext, Syria negotiated with Washington new rules of engagement between Hizbullah and Israel on behalf of Lebanon after Israel launched Operation Grapes of Wrath in April 1996. Moreover, when Israel withdrew from Lebanon on 24 May 2000, its occupation of the Shebaa

farms was used as an excuse for Hizbullah to maintain its weapons and the military confrontation with Israel (Najem 2003: 215).

In 2003, and following the US invasion of Iraq, Syria came under tremendous pressure from the international community. The US “war on terror”, which identified Syria, Iran and Hizbullah as their targets, sought to punish Syria for its opposition to the US invasion and occupation of Iraq. Syria’s growing ties with Iran also alarmed the Bush administration, but especially Syrian-Iranian cooperation in Iraq and their support to Hizbullah. The US wanted to detach Syria from Iran. By doing so, it sought to weaken Hizbullah, who received arms from Iran via Syrian territory. Moreover, and as part of its regional ambitions, the US used UNSCR 1559, which called for the immediate withdrawal of Syrian troops from Lebanon as well as disarming Hizbullah to diminish Syria’s regional role. Damascus resisted the US demands so did the Lebanese government which was then still under Syria control. Moreover, Damascus used Hizbullah operations in the contested Shebaa Farms to underscore the geopolitical threats of ignoring its own occupied lands, and to forestall any attempt at delinking of the Lebanese and Syrian tracks (Salloukh 2005).

According to Khazen (2003, 2001), the Lebanese political structure gradually acquired the features of an authoritarian state, as the margin for tolerance and freedom became narrower in the postwar era. This was exemplified in successive parliamentary elections, which were conducted every four years after 1992, but had small effects on government policy-making. The political decision-making process in Beirut was under the supervision and control of Damascus. The Syrian government installed pliant presidents, namely Elias Hrawi and Emile Lahoud. All cabinet appointments had to pass through Syria’s intelligence prefects in Lebanon: Lieutenant General Ghazi Kan’an and,

subsequently, Brigadier General Rustum Ghazali. Syrian intelligence officers had the important responsibility of approving electoral lists for municipal and parliamentary elections.

Intra- and inter-confessional electoral coalitions were obligatory in order to guarantee the electoral victory of pro-Syrian candidates and the defeat of the opposition. Syrian intelligence officers had the final decision regarding appointments in most public institutions. The Lebanese Army itself was re-indoctrinated, and the intelligence organization was restructured under Syrian terms to serve Syria's geopolitical goals. Foreign policy decision-making continued to be monopolized by the president of the republic despite the constitutional reforms adopted in Ta'if, which shifted this role to cabinet in its collective capacity. Lahoud and Hrawi were both chosen by President Hafiz al-Assad, and followed the foreign policy strategy dictated by Syria with the exclusion of the independent Salim al-Hoss, all of their foreign ministers, followed instructions from Damascus carefully and always deferred to their Syrian counterparts in regional and international conferences (Salloukh 2008).

Syria's domination of all aspects of political life also restricted the freedom of sub-state actors to bandwagon with external allies. This increased the impasse of political life and empowered Syria by giving it control over Lebanon's foreign policy. Lebanese political leaders would compete with each other over who was a closer ally to Syria. Sub-state actors were politically active but loyal to Syria. Political leaders would constantly visit Syria in order to achieve domestic gains over their opponents. Hinnebusch explains that Syria used a divide and rule policy to play politicians against each other by rewarding allies and punishing opponents. By doing this Syria kept a firm hold over Lebanon, placing its hand on all decisions related to Lebanon's domestic and

foreign policies (1998: 149). Towards the end of Syria's control of Lebanon, domestic political stances started to change and some sub-state actors chose to redirect Lebanon away from the Syrian camp. According to Salloukh, sub-state activity was not fully silent for Christians who rejected Syria's domination of Lebanon's foreign policy. These actors reopened channels with external allies to challenge Syria's control of Lebanon (2008: 296). The next section focuses on the independent foreign policy behavior essayed by some Lebanese actors.

3.4 Lebanon's Foreign Policy in Perspective

The foreign policy of Lebanon mirrors its geographic location. The active role of Lebanon's sub-state actors is a result of the confessional system and the country's history of foreign intervention. Salloukh explains that Syria's infiltration of the Lebanese state must be taken in the context of Lebanon's historic vulnerability to foreign intervention. At the state level, Salloukh describes Lebanon's postwar foreign policy as one of "passive preventive accommodation" (2008: 294). This involved avoiding any action that could provoke Syria's interests. This approach was best exemplified in the Arab policies of Elyas Hrawi (1990-1998) and Emile Lahoud (1998-2007) vis-à-vis Syria. Lebanon's foreign policy aligned with Syria's. It focused on the liberation of Israeli-occupied Lebanese territory, the repatriation of Palestinian refugees, and the release of Lebanese prisoners in Israel.

While Syrian penetration was dominant in the postwar period until 2005, Israeli intervention was significant during much of the war and until Israel's withdrawal from the south of Lebanon in 2000. Iran also exerted its influence via ties with Hizbullah

among other Shiite Lebanese factions. The Maronites, who after the war were marginalized from the official political process, attempted to raise awareness about the continuous disenfranchisement of the Lebanese people via their expatriate communities and traditional connections with the West. This resulted in a plethora of sub-state sectarian foreign policy orientations (Salloukh 2008).

According to Khazen, domestic actors in Lebanon during the post-Ta'if era could be classified into three different groups: “loyal parties”, or parties that had “permanent representation in cabinet and parliament”, which included the, Amal, Syrian Socialist Nationalist Party, the Ba’th Party, the Progressive Socialist Party led by Walid Jumblatt; parties that were “allowed to operate but did not have representation in cabinet or parliament” which included the Lebanese Communist Party and National Bloc Party; and finally, parties that were deemed illegal, or were constantly targeted by state authorities. These included the Lebanese Forces the Pro-Iraqi Ba’th Party (2003: 613). Further analysis of the different camps allows us to reconcile the different foreign policy orientations of the sub state actors. The Maronite camp divided along factional lines. Some politicians chose to pursue a deeper alliance with Syria, namely the Franjeh family, both presidents Hrawi and Lahoud, Karim Pakradoni’s wing of the Phalange party, and several independent Maronite politicians (Salloukh 2008). Syrian occupation limited the ability of political groups opposed to Syria to forge relations with external patrons, and therefore reduced the influence of both internal and external players on Lebanon’s foreign policy (Wilkins 2013). The Maronite opposition, on the other hand was represented by Michel ‘Awn’s Free Patriotic Movement, the Lebanese Forces, the Qornat Shihwan Gathering, Amin Gemayel’s Reformist Phalange Movement, Dori Chamoun’s National Liberal Party, and Raymond and then Carlos Eddé’s National Bloc

Party. This group of politicians maintained the traditional Christian foreign policy orientation and opposed Syrian control over Lebanon's domestic and foreign policy but lacked a viable external supporter (Salloukh 2008).

Najem (2012) argues that the leaders of the Muslim sects, tended to consent to Syrian dominance, perhaps unwillingly in some cases in the hope that it could give them enough influence to relieve the damage done to Lebanese national interest. Among the Muslim sects, the Druze Arslan family and Walid Jumblatt's Progressive Socialist Party, Nabih Berri's Shiite Amal Movement the Sunni Karamé and Miqati families in Tripoli, Rafik Hariri in Beirut, and the Shi'a Hizbullah emerged as important Syrian allies in the postwar era. Hizbullah maintained strong ideological, financial, and logistic connections with Damascus as well as Tehran (Salloukh 2008).

At the state level, Salloukh describes a "tug-of-war" that existed between three foreign policy decision-making poles throughout the Hrawi presidency: the foreign minister, allied closely to the president; the commander of the army, Lahoud, who wielded veto power over foreign policy via control of army deployments in south Lebanon; and Hariri, the Prime Minister, who tried to expand his autonomy by using his personal connections with Arab and Western capitals, especially Riyadh, Paris, and the Vatican, along with members of the Syrian regime, namely Vice President Abdel Halim Khaddam and Chief of Staff Army Corps General Hikmat al-Shihabi (2008: 298).

3.5 Economic Foreign Policy

During the post- Ta'if period, the Lebanese government focused its efforts on economic reforms. It prioritized economic reconstruction over political ones. The reason

is that Lebanese political issues were more difficult to address due to internal divisions. Lebanese and Syria economic interests were also entwined during the post-Ta'if period. A good example of this is the Labor Accord between the two governments signed in 1994. This helped legitimize the influx of Syrian workers into the Lebanese labor market. During the 1990s, the number of Syrian workers in Lebanon was estimated to be around 500,000 to 1,000,000, contributing to roughly US \$1 billion in remittances to the Syrian economy (Najem 2003: 216). In addition to this, the trade balance with Syria was tilted substantially in Syria's favor. Syrian imports to Lebanon totaled US\$309 million, while Lebanese exports to Syria in 2000 only totaled US\$26 million (Baroudi 2005: 203).

Although Syria controlled Lebanese political life, more credible sub-state foreign policy aspirations manifested themselves most effectively outside the security arena. For most of the postwar period (1990 -2005), Syria allowed for “Lebanese autonomy in the economic sphere, provided that Syria’s basic security interests were not threatened” (Najem 2003: 219). This created opportunities for a more independent foreign policy initiatives by the Lebanese government designed to enhance postwar economic recovery. There are several reasons behind Syria’s willingness to sanction this: The first were protests as a result of worsening economic conditions, which threatened the viability of the postwar order as a whole. There was also the need to reduce international protests over Syria’s dominance of the country. Finally, Damascus needed to insulate itself from any responsibility in case of an economic collapse. The Syrians thus granted Hariri a degree of maneuverability in foreign policymaking in the economic though not political spheres (2012: 83, 84).

The structure of Lebanon's economy constrained its foreign policy choices: the lack of rent-generating natural resources, a lopsided *laissez-faire* economy based on commerce and services, and state neglect of agriculture and industry necessitated friendly relations with major Western capitals and most Arab states. In addition to this, Lebanon's fiscal health depended on remittances by Lebanese expatriate communities, capital inflows from Arab countries, along with foreign aid (Salloukh 2008). It therefore made sense to reestablish trade with Arab countries and in particular the Gulf economies, which in the prewar period constituted the major markets for Lebanese exports. Politically, postwar governments considered trade and other economic arrangements as a way to reinforce bilateral ties with powerful regional actors, such as Saudi Arabia and Egypt. At the ideological level, Lebanese politicians saw in boosting trade and economic ties with Arab nations an act of substantiation of Lebanon's Arab identity, a proviso confirmed in the 1989 Ta'if Accord (Baroudi 2005). Hariri conducted his own foreign policy with the Gulf States, and was allowed to use his international connections to attract investments and aid for Lebanon, as during the Paris 2 donor conference. He used his personal connections to boost Lebanon's relations with Saudi Arabia, France, and the US (when he was not Prime Minister), and was able to shift the focus point of Lebanon's postwar relations with the west from the Christian political elite to the Sunni community (Salloukh 2008). These economic relations were not without price, however. The Gulf States used their economic relations with Lebanon as a political tool to influence Lebanese domestic and foreign policies. For example, Saudi Arabia threatened to penalize Lebanese expatriates living in Saudi Arabia, in response to airing an anti- Saudi TV program on one of the Lebanese channels, (Wilkins 2013: 49).

Moreover, Hariri used economic policy to counter Syria's control of political life in Lebanon. Syria was alert by Hariri's attempt to lessen the Syrian control over Lebanon. For example, " Syria was against Hariri's trip to Lebanon during the Friends of Lebanon conference in Washington in December 1996" fearing that a closer tie between Washington and Hariri will weaken Syrian power in Lebanon (Najem 2012: 92). As such Hariri was continuously constrained by his perpetual clashes with Lahoud, often reacting by dropping the pro-Syrian foreign minister from his delegation on a number of important foreign trips.

Syria's sudden withdrawal from Lebanon raised hopes that Lebanon will enjoy a more independent political life. The post-2005 governments of Fouad Siniora and Saad Hariri publicized that Lebanon will benefit after years of Syrian hegemony over Lebanon. However, the benefits did not materialize mainly because Lebanon was subject to the same conditions that obstructed economic developments before the withdrawal in 2005, primarily the inability of government to control political and "security situation or to key public sector and administrative reforms" (Najem 2012: 97).

3.6 Conclusion

The Ta'if Accord was never fully implemented according to its letter and spirit. One of the key architects of Ta'if, former speaker Hussein al-Husayni suggested that Ta'if was "fundamentally derailed". Husseini saw little resemblance between the original Ta'if text and the reality that materialized a few years later. Albert Mansur, a former defense minister in the first cabinet formed after Ta'if, called government actions since 1990 a "coup against Ta'if" (Khazen 2001: 44). Kerr (2005) suggests that Lebanon

has always had external political referees who act as arbiters over its domestic disputes, a main weakness of the Lebanese state. Under the auspices of Washington and Riyadh, Damascus was granted the role as the main executioner of the war- to-peace transition in Lebanon. Most analysts suggest that they played a detrimental role in the country while monopolizing all security-related and foreign policy decisions to further their geopolitical and domestic situation.

Many of the foreign policy determinants discussed in chapter two, and existed for decades, were still applicable in the post-Ta'if context. Syria's presence as an 'arbiter' under Ta'if forced political groups to express foreign policy aspirations using more subtle techniques, but especially the economic sphere. Albeit paralyzed, the main Lebanese factions made their own calculations and forged their separate foreign relationships. This was especially the case with Hariri, whose supra-state aspirations caused a rift in his relationship with Damascus. His assassination would subsequently lead the main actors in Lebanon to become more vocal about their foreign policy aspirations, as well as carry the state across a period of instability. This is the topic of the next chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR

The 2006 JULY WAR

4.1 Introduction

This chapter examines the diplomacy of the July 2006 war between Israel and Hizbullah as an example of the overlapping domestic and foreign battles in post-Syria Lebanon. It begins by discussing the geopolitical dynamics of the region prior to the start of the July 2006 war. This geopolitical dynamic shift began with the events of 11 September 2001, and the subsequent invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq. It then looks at internal changes that appeared in Lebanon as a result of these geopolitical shifts. The assassination of Prime Minister Rafik Hariri and the exit of Syrian troops from Lebanon were the two major events in this context. These events would eventually culminate in the July War of 2006. This chapter focuses mainly on the overlapping domestic and foreign policy battles during the war, demonstrating how Lebanese foreign policy is shaped by the dynamic overlap between domestic and geopolitical agendas. In doing so the chapter illustrates how Lebanese foreign policy cannot be explained by any of the IR theories discussed earlier in this thesis.

4.2 The Geopolitics of the 2006 July War

This section will focus on the geopolitics of the region leading up to the 2006 war. It is important to describe the major regional and international foreign policy shifts that occurred after the terrorist attacks against the World Trade Center on 11 September

2001 and the subsequent 2003 US invasion of Iraq. Both were major events that changed dramatically the geopolitics of the region, along with inter-arab relationships and alignments. Because Lebanese domestic and foreign policies are inextricably interwoven, these geopolitical shifts help illustrate the power play among Lebanese sub-state actors leading up to the July 2006 war.

The end of the Cold War and the fall of the Soviet Union opened a period in the Middle East during which the United States enjoyed extraordinary influence and autonomy in its actions. The dominant features of this American era were the U.S.-led liberation of Kuwait, a belligerent Iraq, a radical but besieged Iran, the stationing of U.S. ground and air forces in Gulf countries, Israel as the region's most powerful state and sole nuclear power, and an active diplomatic interest in trying to solve the Arab-Israeli conflict once and for all. According to Richard Haass this period exemplifies an era of “American primacy”, or what is now thought of as the “old Middle East” (Haass 2006: 1).

This shift towards the new Middle Eastern paradigm began after the attacks of 11 September 2001. As a result of these attacks, the US adopted a national security strategy in 2002, which initiated the US ‘war on terror’. It did so by legitimizing military action in the name of self-defense against those who were considered by Washington terrorists. To quote excerpts from the 2002 national security strategy “the war against terrorists of global reach is a global enterprise of uncertain duration. America will help nations that need our assistance in combating terror, and America will hold to account nations that are compromised by terror – because the allies of terror are the enemies of civilization” (Makdisi 2011: 7).

Guided by this logic, Washington launched in 2003 a military invasion of Iraq, and stood victorious after the fall of Saddam Hussein's regime in Baghdad. Both allies and opponents of the US feared that a successful transition for Iraq would allow the US to launch an aggressive campaign against other opponents in the region, using the democratization campaign of Iraq as a model for transformation. This in turn rallied neighboring states against US attempts to stabilize Iraq and turn it to a successful democratic state (Salloukh 2013).

Vali Nasr contends that the Bush administration's major mistake was that it failed to recognize that people in the Middle East view politics as a balance of power among communities, rather than simply a relationship between the people and the state. Rather than forming a liberal democracy after the 2003 Iraq war, most Iraqis viewed the fall of Saddam as an opportunity to "redress injustices in the distribution of power among the country's major communities" (2006: 58). The fall of Saddam also allowed Iran to stretch its influence over Iraq, and consequently increase its geopolitical influence. Appealing to Iraq's large and marginalized Shiite population and political actors, Iran was able to establish a dominant position in post-Saddam Iraq, thus altering the geostrategic balance of power in the region in its favor. This paved the way for a grand political confrontation on the regional level over the next few years; a Saudi-Iranian competition over regional dominance which would play out in a number of weak states, but mainly in Iraq, Yemen, Bahrain, the West Bank and Gaza Strip, and of course Lebanon (Salloukh 2013). While Saudi Arabia allied with the US and a number of other pro-US regional actors, Iran defended its newfound geopolitical power with help from mainly Syria, Hizbullah, and Hamas. King Abdullah of Jordan was the first to coin the term "Shiite crescent", suggesting that Shiite influence was stretching from Beirut to

Tehran, thus cutting through the Sunni-dominated Middle East states (Valbjorn and Bank, 2007: 11).

In this regional confrontation, Iran was backed by Russia on the international stage. Russia began to take a more assertive role in the Middle East after 2004, in an attempt to counterbalance American and French ambitions in the region. Not that Moscow's involvement in Lebanon is new, however. Soviet interest in Lebanon dated back to the foiled coup of 1958 by the Soviet-Nasserist camp. Moscow's relationship with radical Shiite leadership also goes back to Moussa Al-Sadr and the Amal party in Lebanon. According to Tital Nizameddin (2008), Russian involvement and direct support of the Iran-Syria-Hizbullah axis served to strengthen its position on the international stage, to assume the role of the intermediating between warring parties, and to make clear to Washington that it will not submit to pressure from the US and the international and regional levels.

By 2004, Lebanon had become a site for a geopolitical regional struggle. Through a series of UN resolutions starting with 1559 and culminating in 1701, a geopolitical contest was played out on Lebanese territory, a contest in which the Lebanese government itself carried little weight. Lebanon thus became "an open battlefield for the overlapping warring camps, threatening to snatch Lebanon away from Syria's orbit was Washington's way to force Damascus to cooperate in Iraq. Similarly, besieging Hizbullah in Lebanon would undermine Iran's geopolitical reach and Syria's regional assets" (Salloukh 2013: 37).

4.3 Lebanon as a Geopolitical Battleground: 2000-2005

On the night of 24 May 2000, Israel retreated from the security zone in southern Lebanon, ending an eighteen year-old occupation. This was a unilateral withdrawal, completed without prior notice, and without a peace agreement between Lebanon and Israel. This event was hailed a grand victory for Hizbullah. The prestige of this victory allowed Hizbullah to emerge as a symbol of Arab struggle against Israel in the region (Zisser, 2009). It was expected that Hizbullah would give up its arms after the Israeli withdrawal. Syria however continued to provide Hizbullah and its weapons arsenal with political cover in Lebanon. Subsequently the Shebaa Farms, a contested strip of land along the Lebanese – Syria border seized by Israel in 1967 and kept out of its 2000 withdrawal, became the justification for Hizbullah to maintain its weapons and the resistance against Israel (Salem 2006).

After the 2003 Iraq war, Washington turned its focus towards Syria and Lebanon. The American Congress tried to establish Syria as a global security concern and claimed that Damascus was developing WMDs alongside its support of Hizbullah. Consequently, President George W. Bush signed the Syria Accountability and Lebanese Sovereignty Restoration Act in December 2003. The document stipulated that Syria should cease undermining international peace and security by sponsoring international terrorism and developing WMDs. The Act also called upon Syria to end to its occupation of Lebanon for the latter to achieve “full restoration of its sovereignty”. Karim Makdisi contends that this was a neocon plan to destroy Hizbullah and isolate Syria under the umbrella of the “war on terror” (2011: 8). The United States targeted the Lebanese domestic arena as a site of its ‘war on terror’ rhetoric. Foreign policy in Lebanon subsequently polarized around this external threat. Washington demanded full Syrian collaboration in the “war on terror” in post-Saddam Iraq. This also included demands to end Syrian intrusion in

Lebanese affairs, the disbandment and disarmament of Hizbullah, as well as the complete deployment of the Lebanese military over all Lebanese territory, including the southern borders with Israel (Salloukh 2013: 36).

Backed by France and the United States, then Prime Minister Rafik Hariri was ambitious enough to take a more forceful role in Lebanon, using his domestic and international clout to build a strong campaign for the 2005 elections. Hariri was the only politician at the time with sufficient power to counter-balance Syrian influence in Lebanon (Najem 2012). French President Jacques Chirac, who had a close relationship with Hariri, was pushing the Bush administration to take action in Lebanon. Bashar al-Assad was also pressuring the Lebanese parliament to extend the six-year presidential term of Lahoud for three more years. He also summoned Hariri along with parliamentary leaders to Syria to force them to change the constitution. Although the exact events of this meeting are contested, one source claims that Assad told Hariri: “If you think President Chirac and you are going to run Lebanon, you are mistaken... Lahoud is me and this extension is to happen or I will break Lebanon” (Hirst 2010: 301). Eventually Lahoud’s extension as president prompted Hariri to leave office.

Syria’s refusal to obey US demands resulted in the passing of UN Security Council Resolution 1559 on 2 September 2004. In Lebanon, Hariri supported it tacitly. The resolution stated its support “for a free and fair electoral process in Lebanon’s upcoming presidential election conducted according to Lebanese constitutional rules and devised without foreign interference or influence”. It called on “all remaining foreign forces to withdraw from Lebanon”, and mandated the “disbanding and disarmament of all Lebanese and non-Lebanese militias” in the country. According to Salloukh, UNSCR

1559 subsequently became a “tool against Damascus in the grander geopolitical contest in the region” (2013: 36).

The Lebanese delegates at the UN called into question the objectivity of the UN’s decision and summarily rejected the resolution. Concerning Hizbullah’s weapons, the pro-Syrian Lebanese candidate at the Security Council insisted that Hizbullah was a purely Lebanese entity and a Lebanese national resistance force. The Lebanese delegate also insisted that the Lebanese military had complete authority over all Lebanese territory. The debate surrounding Hizbullah’s weapons at the time tried to “denaturalize” Hizbullah’s resistance efforts in an attempt to represent the party as merely a proxy of the Iranian/Syrian “terror axis”. Hizbullah’s opponents insisted on its “militia” status, and that it undermined rather than protected the state. Hizbullah’s counter-narrative, dependent of course on the party’s survival, was to characterize itself as a Lebanese party working to protect Lebanon’s sovereignty and deterring Israel from breaching Lebanese sovereignty (Makdisi 2011: 6).

4.4 Post- Hariri Lebanon: A Pandora’s Box of Divisions

On 14 February 2005, then Former Prime Minister Rafik Hariri was assassinated when a massive remote-controlled truck bomb targeted his convoy as it travelled through the seafront area in downtown Beirut. Hariri’s assassination changed the face of Lebanon. It resulted in an abrupt end to 30 years of Syrian military intervention in Lebanon. On 26 April 2005, Syrian troops withdrew from Lebanon leaving behind a Pandora’s Box of divisions. Few weeks later, the country witnessed two massive but opposing demonstrations that split Lebanon into two different camps. On one side were

Syria's opponents, the March 14 coalition; on the other side were its allies, the March 8 coalition demanding a close relation with Syria thus appeasing Syria. March 14 was led by the mainly Sunni Future Movement; it aligned with the US, France and the moderate Arab states who wanted to relocate Lebanon away from the Syria-Iranian geopolitical camp, a foreign policy shift resisted by the March 8 coalition. "This sharp division took the form of two rival collations promoting conflicting visions of Lebanon's place in the Middle East" (Knudsen and Kerr 2012: 5).

Syria's sudden withdrawal from Lebanon thus "divided Lebanon into two overlapping domestic, regional and international camps for the control of post- Syria Lebanon" (Salloukh 2013: 36). At the domestic level, Hizbullah led the pro-Syrian 8 March camp that wanted to retain Syria's influence in the country. Hizbullah's Secretary-General Sayyed Hasan Nasrallah claimed that Lebanon would continue to be the country of "Arabism, nationalism and resistance" (Hirst 2010: 309). At the regional level, Iran, Syria, and Hamas supported the 8 March camp in Lebanon. Syrian support of Hizbullah allowed Damascus to retain its influence in Lebanon, and to leverage its negotiating position with Israel over a prospective return of the occupied Golan Heights. Moreover, Syria allowed the passage of Russian and Iranian-made weapons from Damascus to Hizbullah in a bid to balance Israel's threat. On the other side stood the March 14 coalition that led the anti-Syrian campaign. It included a section of Christian public opinion, the Druze PSP, and the Future Movement. This coalition had their external allies too. They were backed by the US, France, and the moderate Arab states (Hirst 2010).

Following the death of Hariri the March 14 alliance, backed up by their external allies, issued three demands: the withdrawal of all Syrian troops from Lebanon, an end

to Syrian hegemony over Lebanon, and the establishment of an international investigation into the assassination of Hariri. An international tribunal for the investigation of Hariri's assassination was later initiated. According to Salloukh, "Riyadh offered its unwavering support to the 14 March-led government of Prime Minister Siniora's as it faced Hizbullah's opposition to the international tribunal launched to investigate Hariri's assassination, and refused to resign after Hizbullah organized a massive sit-in downtown Beirut after the 2006 war in an attempt to topple the government" (2013: 37). This, along with the UN Security Council resolutions that underpin it, helped "bureaucratize and internationalize Lebanon's domestic conflicts and made them the matter for international arbitration diplomacy and decision-making" (Knudsen and Kerr 2012: 13). Those three demands sharpened further the division that was present in the country. March 8 would accuse March 14 of collaborating with the US and its protégé Israel in an attempt to take control of post-Syria Lebanon. This group's main objective was to displace Lebanon from the Iran-Syria geopolitical camp and utilized its alliance with the West to achieve this objective. These alliances demonstrate how in a weak state like Lebanon non-state actors bandwagon with external ones to boost their regional and domestic position.

Following Hariri's assassination and Syria's subsequent withdrawal, Lebanese politics became subject to a geopolitical play designed by regional and international powers. For example, the Bush administration also wanted to isolate Syria, and limit the role Iran played in Arab politics through its support of Hizbullah and the Palestinian Islamic resistance movement Hamas. According to Michael Kerr (2012), there was a clear consensus of US, Israeli and anti-Syrian Lebanese interests in delivering the final blow to Hizbullah, at the exact moment of Syrian weakness.

4.5 The 2006 July War and Lebanese Foreign Policy

Both this section and the next one will focus on the 2006 War in Lebanon in the context of the battles over Lebanese foreign policy. The overlap between multiple domestic and external actors that transpired during the war demonstrates the paradox Lebanese foreign policy is always caught in. On one level, international and regional actors used and empowered Lebanese political actors to pursue the former's geopolitical interests; on another level, Lebanese political actors bandwagoned with external actors to enhance their own domestic political positions (Salloukh 2009). The two levels will be analyzed using Israeli's July 2006 war against Hizbullah as a significant example of Lebanon's overlapping foreign policy battles.

4.5.1. The Drums of War

Southern Lebanon was mostly calm following Israel's withdrawal in 2000. UNIFIL, the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon, recorded no important ceasefire violations between May 2000 and November 2005. However, after failed attempts in 2004 and 2005 to capture Israeli soldiers to exchange them for Lebanese prisoners as hostages, Hizbullah announced 2006 to be the "year of the prisoners" (Makdisi 2011:11). On 12 July 2006, Hizbullah fighters crossed the Blue Line and attacked an Israeli army unit killing three Israeli soldiers and capturing two others. Five more Israeli soldiers were killed in a consequent rescue attempt. Hizbullah named the operation "True Promise". According to Nasrallah, the operation had two main goals. The first objective was the release of Lebanese and Palestinian prisoners held in Israeli prisons, including Samir al-Quntar, the longest serving Lebanese prisoner in Israel. The second

objective was to use the media to shed light on the sufferings of the prisoners and their families. Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert accused Lebanon of undertaking an “act of war”, and the UN Secretary General criticized Hizbullah’s attack, requesting that all sides “exercise utmost restraint” to “avoid subsequent escalation” (Makdisi 2011:12).

Israel’s prompt and relatively outsized response to the high jacking of two Israeli soldiers makes Hirst’s claim that Israel began preparing for a new war immediately after May 2000 viable (Hirst 2010: 327). According to Makdisi, “Given the ‘war on terror’ imperatives and discourse Hizbullah’s raid took on new meaning in global terms” (2011: 12). Israel’s reaction was less restrained than previous reactions to cross-border raids by Hizbullah, surprising even Nasrallah who had expected Israel to engage in a limited military escalation (Shadid 2006). Israel would subsequently undertake a complete land, air, and sea blockade, and imposed an extensive bombing campaign on the country’s infrastructure during a 33-day war.

4.5.2. War By Other Means

Lebanon is often labeled a battlefield on which regional geopolitical battles have played out. According to former Ambassador to Lebanon Jeffrey Feltman, “Various groups of Lebanese for generations sought outside support to help check the power of other Lebanese. Regional powers have repeatedly intervened in Lebanon, with proxy competition stoking communal tensions with tragic results” (Aspen Institute 2008:9). The regional split between Western-aligned Arab states, led by Saudi Arabia, and another group of countries or non-state actors led by Iran, reverberate continuously in the Lebanese domestic arena. In the early 1980s, Iran nurtured Hizbullah in order to spread its Islamic Revolution throughout the region. On the other side of the fence,

Saudi Arabia was the main backer of the pro-Western March 14 camp. Riyadh reasoned that Iran's regional role should be balanced to avoid a direct confrontation with Tehran close at home. It viewed both Hamas and Hizbullah as proxy tools in this context, serving Tehran's geopolitical goal to penetrate and vivisection the Arab world (Salloukh 2013: 5). Hirst suggests that "the position of 'moderate Arab state' is unprecedented in the history of Arab- Israeli wars, they were allying more closely with 'the Zionist foe' than with other Arabs doing the battle against Israel" (2010: 339). These states had two major concerns: weakening Iran as much as its Lebanese protégé, Hizbullah.

From a geopolitical perspective, Iran and Syria supported Hizbullah during the July 2006 war to protect their own geopolitical positions while limiting the influence of the US-led coalition. While this support was unquestionable, and helped Hizbullah pursue its domestic and foreign policies, much analyses has been conducted in regards to the extent of Iran and Syria's involvement in Hizbullah's decision-making process in general, and its decision to kidnap the Israeli soldiers in particular. There is no doubt that Hizbullah could not build its strength without constant support by Iran and Syria. Iran had militarily, politically, and financially backed Hizbullah since its founding in the 1980s, and after the Ta'if Agreement it was accorded political cover by the Syrians, who disarmed all other militias in Lebanon. Iran benefited substantially from its ties with Hizbullah. The organization placed Iran at the forefront of the Arab-Israeli conflict, allowing Tehran to threaten or directly attack Israel, as well as enhancing Iran's position among Palestinians and within the Arab world. Iran's support to Hizbullah was obvious during the war. On 16 July, at the World Congress of International Socialists held in Greece, the Iranian foreign minister, Manuchehr Mottaki, criticized Israel's attack on Lebanon, arguing that their tactics did not follow international standards, and were a

continuation of heinous crimes against Palestinians. He also attacked the UN and Security Council for their biased stances on the issue. At the Security Council meeting of 21 July, “The Iranian representative argued that Israeli actions were part of “their designs on Lebanon”, as seen in constant violation of Lebanese airspace and borders, and its unwillingness to give up the Shebaa farms and release Lebanese prisoners from Israeli jails” (Wilkins 2013: 84).

The US-led alliance as well as Israeli officials argued on several occasions that Iran ordered Hizbullah to initiate the conflict to distract attention away from the Iranian nuclear program that was meant to be the main topic of discussion at the G8 Summit in Russia the following week. The prime objective of the Bush administration was to attack Iran. However, reluctant to involve itself militarily in the Middle East, the US provided Israel with the diplomatic cover it required to fight Hizbullah. Since Lebanon’s western-backed government failed to dismantle Hizbullah by persuasion, Condoleezza Rice was in a “hurry for the Israelis to act”. In the summer of 2006, the Israelis took from Washington the green light for a proactive blow against Hizbullah. Addressing the Israeli Prime Minister Olmert few weeks before the war, Rice said, “Look if you guys have to go, we are behind you all the way” (Hirst 2010: 327). Thus the July 2006 War demonstrates how external and sub-state domestic agendas overlap in Lebanon and, consequently, how Lebanon is drawn into larger regional and international conflicts.

4.5.3. Reaction to the 2006 War

The diverse reactions to the 2006 July War, its causes, its actual results, and its aftermath reveal a battle at more than one level. At the domestic level, the battle was between the March 14 pro-West Seniora government and the March 8 pro-Syrian/ pro-

Iranian political groups, in which both sought and used external alliance for domestic political gain. Despite the official government stance condemning the Israeli invasion against Hizbullah, the Siniora government distanced itself from Hizbullah and did not absolve the party of all responsibility for starting the July War (Baroudi and Salamey, 2008). In his book, *July-War Secrets: (Safahat Majhoula Min Hareb Tamouz 2006)*, Ali Hasan Khalil, speaker Nabih Berri's chief advisor recalls daily political and diplomatic events with regard to the July 2006 War. On 12 July 2006 Khalil met with Lebanese Prime Minister Siniora, who was very nervous. Siniora informed Khalil that:

Lebanese government would not take responsibility of the kidnapping. Nasrallah failed to keep his promise not to take any provocative action towards Israel and act independently of the Lebanese government (Khalil 2012:19).

MP Muhammad Fneish told Siniora that the government's position on the kidnapping placed the Lebanese government against the Resistance. Siniora subsequently released a softer statement in this regard (Pakradoni 2012: 298). Nasrallah's response was that Hizbullah's "battle isn't internal, and that he would ignore what's been said by Siniora for the sake of the major battle. His main concern was that no decision restricting their internal movement against Israel be made".¹

On 13 July 2006, cabinet held two sessions.

In his discussion, President Emile Lahoud warned the attendees from some talk in the [first] session, whereby the ministers of the [former] majority [the March-14 Alliance] commenced escalating their tone and using the ambassador's expressions.²

¹ See: <http://english.alahednews.com.lb/essaydetails.php?eid=15140&cid=385#.UhE9ohYzkII>.

² See: <http://english.alahednews.com.lb/essaydetails.php?eid=15140&cid=385#.UhKaQBYzIFl>
TRANSLATED from Lebanese Daily As-Safir- Local Editor

Karim Pakradoni recalls that Marwan Hamade, member of the 14 alliance, told President Lahoud, who was a close ally of March 8: “look what your allies have done.” Lahoud answered: “The resistance will come out victorious” and “the Israeli’s will not be able to defeat it” (Pakradoni 2012: 296). Aoun shared a similar opinion to Lahoud’s, stating that Hizbullah represented an entire population which cannot be abolished (Pakradoni 2012).

The Wikileaks cables shed light on the close coordination that transpired between March 14 members and the US embassy in Lebanon. On 13 July, in a meeting between Siniora and US ambassador Jeffrey Feltman, Siniora “argued that the only possible way to alleviate the situation would be for the Government of Lebanon to “change the script by dissociating the Government of Lebanon from Hizbullah’s actions”. Siniora also expressed fear of a Syrian return to Lebanon using the Israeli’s aggression as a pretext. Nevertheless, Siniora also condemned Israel's military retaliation as “disproportionate” and “unhelpful”, and requested that the US Government, along with International agencies, pressure Israel to end its assault and lift its air and sea blockade³. The after-mentioned reflects March 14’s use of US assistance, as well as the inability of the Lebanese government to act as a unitary actor. Moreover, in a 17 July meeting that included Jeffrey Feltman, UN Undersecretary-General Terje Rød-Larsen, Jumblatt, Minister of Telecommunications Marwan Hamadeh, and Minister of Information Ghazi Aridi, Jumblatt explained that “even though March 14 should call for a cease-fire in public, it is hoping in private that Israel proceeds with its military operations until it destroys Hizbullah’s military capabilities”⁴. Jumblatt then proceeded to offer military advise as to how Israel can succeed in its mission: “You can’t win this kind of war with

³ See Wikileaks para.1, at: <http://www.al-akhbar.com/node/6481/>

⁴ See Wikileaks, para.7, at: <http://www.al-akhbar.com/node/6742>

zero dead. Israel will have to invade southern Lebanon. Israel must be careful to avoid massacres, but it should clear Hizbullah out of southern Lebanon. Then the LAF can replace the IDF once a cease-fire is reached”.⁵

Those above statements are clear examples of the different visions that both March 8 and 14 have for Lebanon. Moreover, the Siniora government’s reaction to the outbreak of the war reflects the sharp differences and divisions between the March 14 and March 8 coalitions. The March 14 alliance was torn between a desire to stop the Israeli attacks on Lebanon, and the hope that the attacks will continue to emasculate or end Hizbullah as a military force. The Siniora government was unable to assume a coherent position on the war. It was not able to support Hizbullah’s fight against Israel. It rather chose to distance itself from Hizbullah, declaring that it had no involvement in the decision to kidnap the Israeli soldiers. This Israel understood as a tacit approval to continue its attacks against Hizbullah (Wilkins 2013).

The Wikileaks cable, dated 5 August 5 2006, reported a meeting between then U.S. Ambassador to Lebanon Jeffrey Feltman, then assistant to the U.S. Secretary of State David Welsh, Phalange Party leader Amin Gemayel, his son Pierre, the National Liberal party leader Dory Chamoun, the National bloc leader Carlos Edde, the March 14 general secretariat coordinator Fares Soaid, MPs Georges Adwan, Nayla Mouwad, Nassib Lahoud, and Butros Harb. The participants “voiced their full support for then Prime Minister Fouad Siniora’s call for a ceasefire during the war, simultaneously voicing fears that Hizbullah would emerge from the conflict stronger than it was before should the ceasefire be implemented immediately. They instead supported the idea of extending the Israeli aggression ‘for a week or two’, enough to weaken the party. The

⁵ See Wikileaks, para.8, at: <http://www.al-akhbar.com/node/6742>

attendees said that they were voicing Siniora's private sentiments regarding the war, adding that Israel should 'pound Hizbullah to such an extent that it would return to its senses'. Harb was quoted saying: "If Israel is convinced that it can finish the job, then it [14 March] would allow the war to be extended seven to ten days"⁶.

The other contest that transpired during the 2006 War was a geopolitical struggle between Washington and Saudi Arabia against Iran and Syria using Lebanon as a battleground for their own agendas. The 2006 War underscored once again how internal battles overlap with foreign interests to shape Lebanese foreign policy, and how Lebanese domestic actors continue to disagree on defining the enemy, the ally, and the country's foreign policy orientation vis-à-vis the Arab-Israeli conflict and the future of Hizbullah's arms. According to Makdisi "Hizbullah's 12 July attack was an opportunity for the US administration, increasingly frustrated in Iraq, to reinvigorate its plans for a 'new Middle East' with a quick victory in Lebanon. The 2006 war thus became a defining battle, even a proxy war, in its war on terror" (2011: 12).

Israel also framed its war in Lebanon within the 'war on terror' discourse. By 14 July, Israel had announced its goals, which included the elimination of Hizbullah and the implementation of UNSCR 1559. Senior Israeli foreign ministry spokespersons, such as Gideon Meir, repeated that Israel "views Hamas, Hizbullah, Syria and Iran as primary elements in the axis of terror and hate, threatening not only Israel but the entire world" (Makdisi 2011:12). The US insisted during the first days of the war that the UN should not take any action until Israel achieved its objectives. The US wanted to destroy Hizbullah; it also wanted to protect the March 14 government. It thus prevents Israel from destroying Lebanon's power stations (Makdisi 2011). America's unwillingness to

⁶ See Wikileaks, para. 2, at: <http://www.al-akhbar.com/node/6958>

convince Israel to end the conflict sooner than later created the perception that Israel was acting as a US proxy against Hizbullah, in a manner similarly to how Hizbullah is considered a proxy to Iran. For example, when Olmert asked for more time to complete the war's military objective, the US persuaded the rest of the world to comply (Kessler 2007). Moreover, three Sunni Arab states, in a stark departure from Arab League norms, criticized publically Hizbullah's decision to attack Israel. Members of the US-led alliance of moderate states were also concerned about regional divisions between Sunni and the Shiite. For example, they were concerned that Iran was exploiting and supporting the Shiite of Iraq. In a joint statement, Jordanian King Abdallah II and Egyptian President Husni Mubarak charged Hizbullah with "dragging the region into 'adventures'" (Valbjorn and Bank 2007: 7). At the request of the US President, Saudi officials also publically voiced concerns about Hizbullah's irresponsibility and "adventurism", as did senior Sunni clerics such as Sheikh Abdallah bin Jibrin and regime-controlled media outlets such as the Saudi-owned newspaper *al-Sharq al-Awsat* and the satellite channel al-Arabiyya. These organizations criticized Hizbullah for being a pawn of Shiite-Persian Iran and Syria (Valbjorn and Bank, 2007: 7).

The July War thus demonstrates how Lebanese local sub-state actors bandwagon with external actors to advance their own political and confessional interests against their domestic opponents. The next section examines the diplomatic negotiations that took place to end the war. Those negotiations also reflect the battle between March 8 and March 14 and their external allies over Lebanon's foreign policy orientation after the July war.

4.6 Diplomacy as War by Other Means

The diplomatic battles that occurred over formulating the Seven-point plan and UNSCR resolution 1701 best reflect the overlapping contests between Lebanese sub-state actors and external actors. The Seven-point plan issued by the Siniora government represented the foreign policy objectives of March 14 coalition and its external allies. The final draft of UNSCR 1701 embodied Hizbullah's perspective and that of its regional allies as the next section demonstrates.

4.6.1. Siniora's Seven-Point Plan

On July 26, at the international conference for Lebanon in Rome, Prime Minister Siniora proposed a seven-point plan, which was partly incorporated in UNSCR 1701, to end the war. The Seven-point plan was Siniora's foreign policy document. It is best regarded as part of the domestic battle between March 14 and March 8. Article 4 reflects the agenda of March 14 along with their external allies, the US-led coalition, for the disarmament of Hizbullah. It stated that:

The Lebanese government extends its authority over its territory through its own legitimate armed forces, such that there will be no weapons or authority other than that of the Lebanese state as stipulated in the Ta'if national reconciliation document.⁷

In Rome, Siniora presented his plan as the official plan based on the consent of Lebanese. In reality, government ministers were divided over Siniora's plan (Khalil 2012; Salloukh 2012; Pakradoni 2012). In his *Memoires as Minister of Foreign Affairs and Immigrants: 2005-2009*, Fawzi Salloukh describes the Cabinet meeting of 27 July that gathered upon Siniora's return from Rome. At the meeting Lahoud criticized Siniora's announcement of the Seven-point plan without prior voting on it in Cabinet

⁷ See Siniora Seven-Point plan, at: <http://www.lebanonwire.com/0608mIn/06081223fslw.asp>

and without close coordination with him. In addition, Lahoud criticized the third and fourth articles arguing that the third calls for the Shebaa Farms to be under UN supervision, but did not mention the issue of the water reservoirs as shown below:

A commitment from the Security Council to place the Shebaa Farms area and the Kfarshouba Hills under UN jurisdiction until border delineation and Lebanese sovereignty over them are fully settled. While in UN custody, the area will be accessible to Lebanese property owners there. Further, Israel surrenders all remaining landmine maps in South Lebanon to the UN.⁸

Also, Lahoud also criticized the fourth point because it pertains to the disarmament of Hizbullah without linking it to an Israeli withdrawal from the Shebaa Farms and the complete return of land (Salloukh 2012: 377). Siniora's Seven-Point Plan discloses the overlap between domestic and external actors for political gains. Siniora's dependence on external actors to help him implement his foreign policy agenda is best revealed in Article 7:

The international community commits to support Lebanon on all levels, and to assist it in facing the tremendous burden resulting from the human, social and economic tragedy which has afflicted the country, especially in the areas of relief, reconstruction and rebuilding of the national economy.⁹

The failure to implement article 3 of UNSCR 1559, which called for "the disbanding and disarmament of all Lebanese and non-Lebanese militias," proved that disarming Hizbullah is impractical.¹⁰ Siniora consequently attempted to maximize his political gains by aiming to weaken Hizbullah. This he tried to do by limiting its military maneuvers, incase disarming Hizbullah fails. Article 5 of his Seven-point Plan reveals this interest:

⁸ See Article 3 in Siniora Seven-Point plan, at: <http://www.lebanonwire.com/0608mIn/06081223fslw.asp>

⁹ See Article 7 in Siniora Seven-Point plan, at: <http://www.lebanonwire.com/0608mIn/06081223fslw.asp>

¹⁰ See UNSCR 1559, at: <http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2004/sc8181.doc.htm>

The UN international force, operating in South Lebanon, is supplemented and enhanced in numbers, equipment, mandate and scope of operation as needed, in order to undertake urgent humanitarian and relief work and guarantee stability and security in the south so that those who fled their homes can return.¹¹

The 8 March alliance contested that those above points were not agreed up on before the Rome conference, accusing Siniora of using the war to impose upon Hizbullah terms unimaginable before the war. Despite their disputes over Siniora's foreign policy agenda, the March 8 coalition led by Hizbullah approved the seven-point plan on 28 July. In doing so the, Hizbullah "reinforced national unity; prevented internal unrest; avoided accusations that it was obstructing attempts to end the war" (Wilkins 2013:120).

At this stage, the US was working to prolong the war. It pushed for a political solution before a ceasefire, whereas other nations such as France urged for an immediate end of the war. Fawzi Salloukh told Al-Jazeera television that "the United States favored a single comprehensive resolution that would be issued under Chapter VII of the UN Charter, which authorizes the use of force. In contrast, France wanted an initial resolution under Chapter VI that would be followed by another under Chapter VII providing for the establishment of an international force".¹² UN Secretary General Kofi Annan called for an immediate cessation of hostilities to bring to an end the consequent humanitarian crisis. He blamed the war on Hizbullah's 'reckless' actions and accused it of 'deliberate targeting of Israeli population centers', but also demanded that Israel 'ends its bombardments, blockades and ground operations'. Annan also called for the

¹¹ See Article 5 in Siniora Seven-point plan, at:
<http://www.lebanonwire.com/0608mln/06081223fslw.asp>

¹² See Daily Star newspaper, 11 August 2006, at:
<http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Politics/Aug/11/UN-resolution-proposals-fall-short-of-Lebanese-demands.ashx#ixzz2cMnAWSig>

deployment of and ‘international force’ to assist the Lebanese government in implementing UNSCR 1559 (Makdisi 2011:13).

Calls for a ceasefire, supported by the UN, EU, and some Arab governments, were premised on the growing realization that Hizbullah would not be defeated militarily. The US’s failure to insist on a cease-fire at the beginning of the conflict weakened its position in the region, as well as the position of the Siniora government. The Siniora government, which had distanced itself from Hizbullah at the outbreak of the war, could not continue to do so when the damage in the country became too great. Consequently, the Siniora government changed its position and began to ask for regional and international support to negotiate a complete cease-fire. This was especially the case after the 30 July Qana massacre, in which 28 civilians including 16 children were killed. As a reaction, Siniora distanced his government from the US by canceling talks with US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice in Beirut, and described the victims of the Israeli attacks as martyrs (Knudsen and Kerr 2012).

By then the US was also beginning to doubt Israel’s ability to destroy Hizbullah. The US co-sponsored a draft resolution on 5 August authorizing NATO-style peace enforcement to be deployed with the main objective of disarming Hizbullah, in order to salvage its position. However, the Lebanese government, which was under intense domestic pressure given the extensive damage and human casualties, could not accept this proposition (Makdisi 2011).

4.6.2. UNSCR 1701

On 13 August Israel agreed to the terms of UN Security Council Resolution 1701 and ended the fighting. According to Makdisi, the negotiation of 1701 revealed two

“contradictory narratives” which appear in the final text of the resolution. The first narrative holds Hizbullah as the principle terrorist threat to Lebanon’s sovereignty and Israel’s security, and reaffirms a split between Hizbullah and the people of Lebanon. The second narrative opposed this one-sided language and thus reframed Israel as the main threat to Lebanon’s security. All direct references to Chapter VII of the UN charter, which sanctions the use of force by the international community as the 5 August draft had called for, were deleted from the final resolution text. Instead of an ‘international force’ mandated with disarming Hizbullah and securing the Lebanese–Syrian border. The existing UNIFIL was expanded in numbers and scope, but remained a traditional peacekeeping force. The UNIFIL would only be authorized, as the text described, to “monitor the cessation of hostilities”, and “accompany and support the Lebanese army as they deploy throughout the South”. In this narrative, the UNIFIL could not actively try to disarm Hizbullah without unequivocal instructions from the Lebanese government, in which Hizbullah and its March 8 allies were represented (2011: 14). UNSCR 1701 revealed the internal divisions between Lebanese. The pro-US March 14 coalition supported UNSCR 1701 because it attended to some of its domestic objectives mainly the deployment of the Lebanese Army south of the Litani River, of the UNIFIL force in South Lebanon, and the disarmament of Hizbullah as stated in UNSCR 1701, article 3:

Emphasizes the importance of the extension of the control of the Government of Lebanon over all Lebanese territory in accordance with the provisions of resolution 1559 (2004) and resolution 1680 (2006), and of the relevant provisions of the Ta’if Accords, for it to exercise its full sovereignty, so that there will be no weapons without the consent of the Government of Lebanon and no authority other than that of the Government of Lebanon.¹³

The divisions between March 8 and 14 were also exposed in the Cabinet meeting

¹³ See UNSCR 1701, at: <http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2006/sc8808.doc.htm>

on 13 August. Siniora addressed Hizbullah's MP, Muhammad Fneish asking him whether Hizbullah would give away their arms or hide them since UNSCR 1701 dictated that there will be no weapons outside the control of the Lebanese army. Following the meeting, Lahoud advised Fneish to stop attending cabinet meetings pressuring the government to remove from its agenda, the disarmament issue (Pakradoni 2012: 312). On its part, Hizbullah accused the Siniora government of seeking foreign assistance, using the UN to limit Hizbullah's political and military capabilities. On 14 August 2013, in a television interview on Al- Mayadeen channel, Nasrallah accused former Prime Minister Fouad Siniora, who headed the government during the 2006 war, of prolonging the Israeli war on Hizbullah Nasrallah asserted "that Siniora's government delayed informing the United Nations that Hezbollah had endorsed United Nations Security Council Resolution 1701, which brokered a cessation of hostilities".¹⁴

Hizbullah argued that March 14 used 1701 as a tool "to leverage international support against Hizbullah domestically and extricate Lebanon, once and for all, from both the Arab-Israeli conflict and Iranian/Syrian sphere of influence" (Makdisi 2011:16). March 8 criticized UNSCR 1701 for being favorable to Israeli demands. On August 9, in a televised conference on Al-Manar channel, Nasrallah stated "the resolution is unjust and unfair because it held Hezbollah responsible for starting the aggression". Moreover, "the resolution gave the Israelis through international pressures what they could not gain through fighting".¹⁵ Different articles in UNSCR 1701 also indicate the bias towards Israel: Article 1 requires of Hizbullah "to stop all attacks"

¹⁴ See Daily Star newspaper, 15 August 2013, at: <http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/LebanonNews/2013/Aug-15/227431-nasrallah-claims-responsibility-for-border-blast.ashx#ixzz2cNFCszPR>

¹⁵ See Daily Star newspaper, 13 August 2006, at: <http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Politics/Aug/13/Lebanon-approves-UN-resolution.ashx#axzz2cKMIF9Ib>

while only asks Israel to cease “offensive actions”; article 2 did not demand an “immediate Israeli withdrawal from Lebanese land, allowing Israel to remain in Lebanon until UNIFL and Lebanese troops” took control” (Wilkins 2013: 122).

Hizbullah, for its part, considered the UNSCR 1701 a “US–Israeli project to crush the resistance and create a pliant Lebanese state as the main threat to Lebanon’s sovereignty, and only reluctantly accepted 1701” (Makdisi 2011:16). However, despite being criticized for being favorable to Israel, UNSCR 1701 shows that the final resolution turned out to be more supportive of Hizbullah interests in comparison with March 8 interests as stipulated in Seven-Point plan. UNSCR 1701 states that “there will be no weapons without the consent of the government of Lebanon”, leaving the final resolution of Hizbullah arms to Lebanese government; in contrast Siniora’s Seven-point plan enforces that “ there will be no weapons or authority other than that of the Lebanese state” (Wilkins 2012:123).

Although Hizbullah’s victory on the battlefield during 2006 is undeniable; the seeds of recognition of this victory did not immediately surface internally. This was due to the fact that the Siniora government, along with its external US allies, continued to promote their interests in the disarmament of Hizbullah as well as the isolation of the Syrian regime. That being said, the 2006 conflict that had taken on an international military dimension was now geared towards the Lebanese government’s ability to legitimize or discard the armed resistance and defines its relationship with the Lebanese army. This ongoing conflict took on a sectarian dimension, which ultimately lead to the collapse of national unity. This was clearly demonstrated on November 2007 when the withdrawal of Hizbullah and Amal’s ministers from cabinet resulted in a constitutional vacuum.

4.7 Conclusion

This chapter discussed Lebanese foreign Policy in the context of its domestic and external factors. It examined the 2006 War and its internal and external dynamics. This was done to demonstrate the overlap between domestic and external actors in the making of Lebanese foreign policy. The 2006 war emphasized the role played by sub-state actors in shaping Lebanon's foreign policy behavior. It also demonstrated how domestic and regional confrontations have exaggerated the intersection of domestic and foreign politics in Lebanon. Moreover, the formulation of both the Seven-Point Plan the UNSCR 1701 exposed the divisions of Lebanese politicians and their struggle over the control of post-Syria Lebanon. There were no decisive winners at the end of the war. The war produced winners and losers on both sides. Although the final resolution was more supportive of Israel's agenda, yet Israel ultimately failed to disarm Hizbullah, its key objective. Hizbullah was later able to claim victory against Israel and used this discourse to strengthen its domestic and regional position. The next chapter spells out the conclusions drawn as a result of this research.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

5.1 Summing Up the Argument

Whether it is realism, constructivism, or pluralism, applying one theoretical framework to the study of Lebanese foreign policy is an exceptionally complex endeavor. After all, none of these after-mentioned theories can capture the overlapping domestic and external dynamics involved in the making of Lebanese foreign policy. The National Pact of 1943 had failed to provide a common ground for power sharing among Lebanese confessional leaders. It also failed to establish a strong government and to solve Lebanon's identity paradox. This, in turn, had direct implications on Lebanon's foreign policy orientation. The different visions of Lebanon held by different Lebanese sects were reflected in the battles over Lebanese foreign policy choices. Different domestic sub-state actors pursued their own foreign policy alliances outside the control of the central government. As a result, and with the possible exception of the Shehabist era in Lebanon (1985-1970), the Lebanese government was however not the only player in making Lebanese foreign policy. It shared this role with domestic sub-state actors who have been influenced by supra-state identities and external actors.

With the collapse of the National Pact during the civil war Lebanon's foreign policy shattered into sectarian pieces. The outbreak of the civil war demonstrated how Lebanon is permeable to the influences of the regional and international system. In fact, Lebanon is often described as the battlefield where proxy wars take place. This is due to

the organic relation between foreign and domestic politics in Lebanon. Foreign intervention in Lebanon is always encouraged by different domestic actors who seek foreign assistance to advance their own domestic agendas. As a result, the demarcation line between domestic and foreign interest became blurry. Lebanese foreign policy is thus characterized by a stubborn tendency of local sub-state actors to bandwagon with external actors to advance their own political interests against other domestic opponents. This has resulted in the inability of the central government to produce a unitary state foreign policy.

The postwar Ta'if Accord gave Syria substantial control over Lebanese politics. In terms of foreign policy the Ta'if Accord recognized that Lebanon was linked to Syria by *'ilaqat mumayyaza*. This meant that the Lebanese government was unable to pursue foreign policy choices not approved by Syria. Consequently, sub-state actors, who favored strong ties with Syria, were politically rewarded by Damascus; those who did not were banished from political life. By controlling the keys to Lebanon's politics, Syria monopolized foreign policy decisions thus furthering its geopolitical role as a regional power. However, despite the paralysis in Lebanon's political life, Lebanese political actors continued to forge their separate external relations especially in the economic sphere. Hariri deployed economic policy to resist Syria's control of Lebanon. His relation with Syria turned into a severe battle over the control of Lebanon. Hariri used his international contacts to engineer UNSCR 1559 to undermine Syria's hold over Lebanon.

The overlapping domestic and external battles over Lebanese foreign policy intensified with Syria's exit from Lebanon after Hariri's assassination. Those pressures

were most evident in the July 2006 war. The war exposed the overlapping dynamics between domestic and foreign battles over Lebanon. At the domestic level, the post-Syria era witnessed a struggle between different Lebanese political groups to control Lebanon. This struggle overlapped with another one at a regional level to relocate Lebanon from one geopolitical camp to another. The positions of different Lebanese political actors during the war especially the differences between Siniora's Seven-point plan and the UNSCR 1701, demonstrated the overlap between opposing domestic and external groups. This research aims to contribute to the literature on Lebanese politics because it underlines the main factors that prevent the Lebanese state from formulating a coherent foreign policy.

5.2 Future Challenges

The challenges facing Lebanese foreign policy are starkly demonstrated in the spillover effects of the war in Syria between the regime and its opponents, and their respective external allies. The ongoing geopolitical battle for Syria threatens the sectarian balance of power in Lebanon, and has divided the Lebanese between those who support and those who oppose the Syrian regime. Hizbullah's political involvement and military intervention in Syria elicited criticism from anti-regime actors in Syria and beyond, but also from those Lebanese groups who support the war against the Assad regime. This has amplified tensions between Lebanon's Sunni and Shiite sects, threatening to trigger a sectarian confrontation in the country. Hizbullah justifies the party's involvement in Syria as a strategic decision to support the axis-of-resistance in

the face of the moderate Arab states and extremist salafi groups (*Tak'firin*) sent and funded by the Gulf States to fight along the Syrian opposition.

The involvement of different Lebanese groups on different sides of the Syrian battle is a reminder of the role of sub-state actors, as they bandwagon with external geopolitical camps, in the struggle over Lebanese foreign policy and Lebanon's geopolitical location. However, this is the first time different sub-state actors carry their contests beyond the Lebanese borders. The foreign policy battles that opened after the Syrian withdrawal from Lebanon in 2005, culminating in the 2006 July War, continue today as the Lebanese are divided over Hizbullah's involvement in Syria. This division underscores yet again the deficiencies of Lebanon's confessional system that allocates power to sub-state political groups, undermines state institutions, and allows different sub-state actors to bandwagon with external actors to advance their own domestic interests in the service of their geopolitical patrons but at the expense of Lebanon's peace and sovereignty. The overlap between domestic and external pressures has long affected Lebanon's foreign policy. This time, however, the stakes may just be too high. Time will only tell whether the foreign policy battles now underway among Lebanon's domestic actors over Syria will drag the country into another cycle of warfare.

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